

A Dream Come True

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THE CHRISTCHURCH TOWN HALL



W. J. A. Brittenden

*Cover photograph and plan, Mannering and Associates.
Photographs on flap, Robin Smith Photography.*

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CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

Contents

FOREWORD — <i>Cr H. G. Hay</i>	4
AN APPRECIATION — <i>Mr N. G. Pickering, Mayor of Christchurch</i>	5
CHRISTCHURCH TOWN HALL COMMITTEE	6
1. IN THE BEGINNING	7
The 'Old' Town Hall	7
The 'New' Town Hall	10
2: THE YEARS BETWEEN	16
Making do	16
Unrequited Endeavour	16
3: THE BEGINNING OF THE END	24
The Horse before the Cart	24
Metropolitan Concord	27
4: THE BATTLE OF THE SITES	30
5: MARKET PLACE	35
6: ON THE DRAWING BOARD	41
Architectural Competition	42
7: THE DREAM THAT CAME TRUE	43
8: 'MY BUSINESS IS TO CREATE'	47
The Architects	47
The Consultants	48
The Contractors	51
9: DOWN TO EARTH	52
The Contract	52
Vice-Regal Occasion	53
10: A DAY TO REMEMBER	55
The Opening	55
11: THANKS BE	57
Town Hall Amenities	57
Other Gifts	59
Major Town Hall Gifts	60
12: FACTS AND FIGURES	61

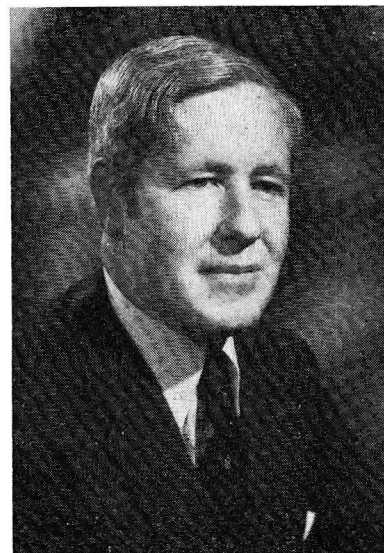
Foreword

THIS short history was commissioned by the Town Hall Committee in order to record for present and future citizens of Christchurch the story of the building of a Town Hall for our City. The aspirations, frustrations and eventual achievements involved in this somewhat protracted civic enterprise, covering a period of 110 years, all serve to make it a narrative worthy of publication, and the Committee is grateful to Mr Brittenden for the extensive research he has undertaken and for the excellence of the record he has compiled. He has provided a fascinating collection of photographs which, in themselves tell much of the story.

The building of the very fine Town Hall complex which we now possess has been a memorable team effort involving the active participation of all Local Bodies in Metropolitan Christchurch, as well as the very considerable voluntary financial assistance of the people of Canterbury over a period of 15 years. The efforts of the Architects and other Consultants, the Contractors and the Councils have all been suitably covered in what I am confident will prove to be a very popular and readable short history. We requested that it be kept comparatively brief, and we hope that it will be widely read by both young and old.

The Committee has decided that any profits which may be derived from the sale of this book will be added to the Town Hall Organ Fund.

May I take this opportunity of expressing my sincere appreciation to all those who have, over the years, contributed in any way to the building of our new Town Hall. We hope you will agree that it has been worth waiting for.

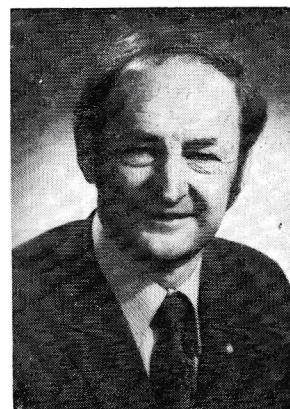


Cr Hamish G. Hay, Chairman,
Town Hall Committee,
President, Town Hall Promotion.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'H. G. Hay' with a stylized flourish at the end.



Mr J. B. Collett, Mayor of
Lyttelton



Mr R. W. J. Harrington,
Mayor of Riccarton

An Appreciation



His Worship the Mayor of
Christchurch, Mr N. G. Pickering,
J.P.

ON the completion of the Christchurch Town Hall and Convention Centre, it is my privilege, on behalf of the citizens of greater Christchurch, to thank all those who, since the project was first launched, have contributed their time, talents, enthusiasm and funds. I believe this building, as it becomes known internationally, will be ranked amongst the finest of its type in the world.

The Town Hall is a fine example of co-operation between local authorities, as it is in every way a combined effort by those in the metropolitan area — the Christchurch City Council, the Waimairi, Paparua and Heathcote County Councils, and the Riccarton and Lyttelton Borough Councils.

Congratulations to the Christchurch Town Hall Committee, not only those presently in office, but also previous members who contributed of their wisdom towards the project. Town Hall Promotion Inc. also played a very significant part over the years, being responsible for raising nearly \$500,000.

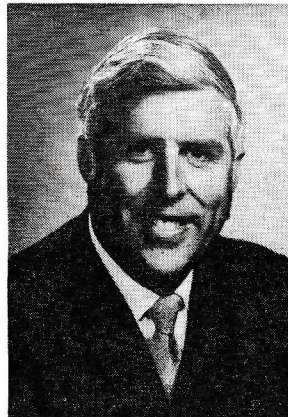
With this magnificent amenity available, coupled with forthcoming hotel construction and our fine International Airport, Christchurch will assume a new importance as a convention centre not only nationally, but for much of the South Pacific and even further afield.

Its present high status as a cultural centre will also be enhanced, and we can look forward to local and overseas productions of increasing quality and frequency.

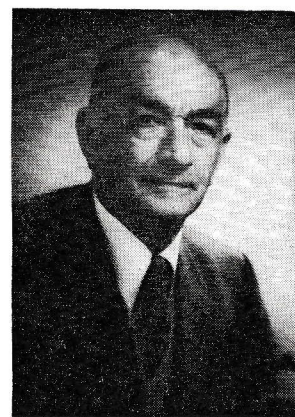
N. G. Pickering



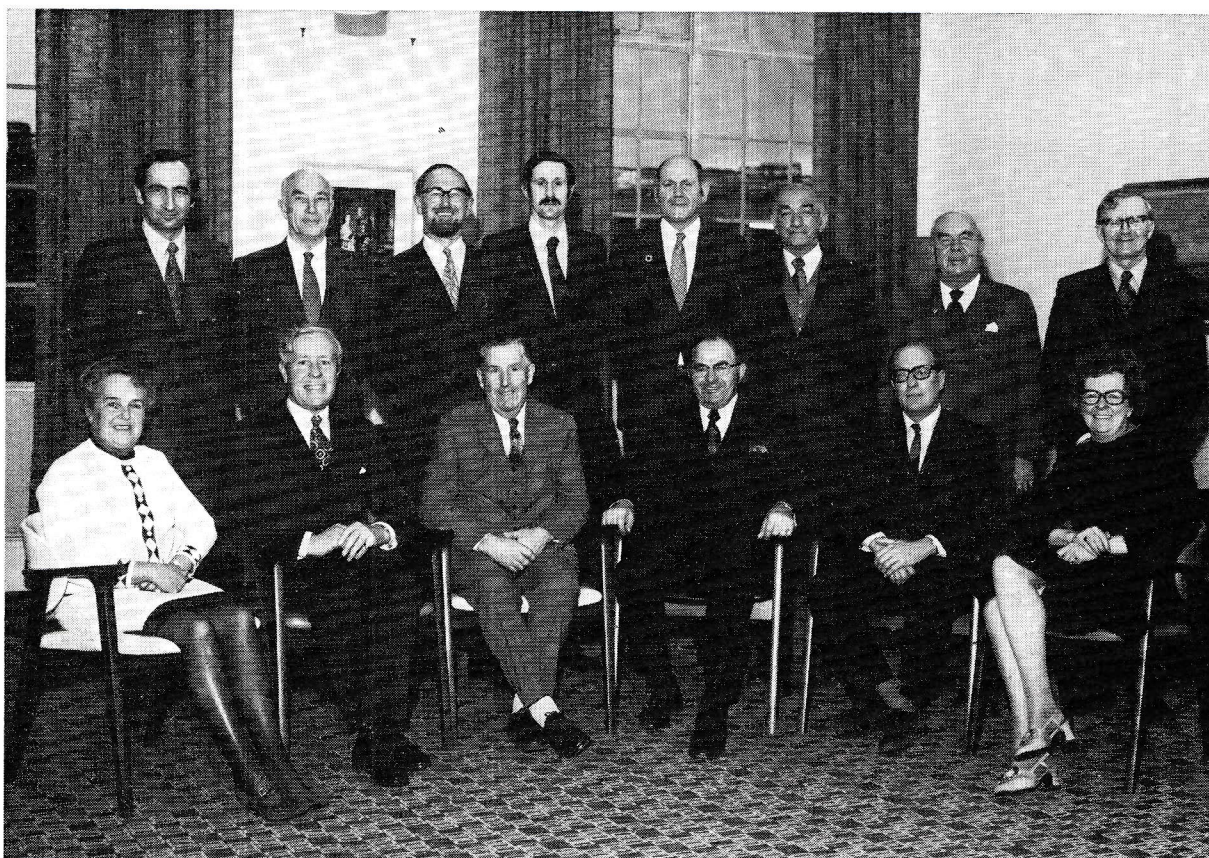
Cr. D. H. Warren,
Chairman, Paparua County



Cr. D. B. Rich, Chairman,
Waimairi County



Cr. E. L. Tyndall, Chairman,
Heathcote County



THE CHRISTCHURCH TOWN HALL COMMITTEE, 1972. *Back row, left to right:* Cr P. J. McAloon, (Riccarton Borough), Mr C. B. Wells (Town Hall Promotion), Cr W. T. Rice (Waimairi County), Cr C. R. Harman (Waimairi County), Cr R. H. Duff J.P. (Lyttelton Borough), Cr E. L. Tyndall J.P. (Heathcote County), Cr Hon. R. M. Macfarlane C.M.G. (Christchurch City), Cr E. C. Britnell J.P. (Paparua County). *Front row, left to right:* Cr Helen Garrett (Christchurch City), Cr H. G. Hay (Chairman) (Christchurch City), Cr H. W. Bennett J.P. (Deputy Chairman) (Paparua County), Mr N. G. Pickering J.P. (Mayor of Christchurch), Cr D. R. Dowell J.P. (Christchurch City), Cr Mary Batchelor (Christchurch City).

PAST COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following is a list of those who have served on the Christchurch Town Hall Committee since the inclusion of representatives of Metropolitan Local Bodies meeting on July 31, 1963, except for those, shown above, sitting on the present committee.

Representing Christchurch City Council: Crs. G. D. Griffiths, H. E. Denton, A. R. Guthrey, H. P. Smith, W. P. Glue, L. Christie, A. E. Armstrong, A. Schumacher, R. H. Stillwell, G. D. Hattaway, P. N. G. Blaxall, P. D. Dunbar, E. B. E. Taylor. *Representing Paparua County Council:* Crs. J. H. Weaver, P. Wynn-Williams, W.L. Ragg. *Representing Lyttelton Borough Council:* Cr N. D. Walker, *Representing Heathcote County Council:* Crs. J. C. Hollis, L. L.

Smith, C. D. Le Compte, G. N. Bowron. *Representing Waimairi County Council:* Crs J. I. Colligan, O. C. Mitchell, W. E. Cassidy, M. P. Hobby, R. C. Neville. *Representing Riccarton Borough Council:* Mr E. J. Bradshaw, Cr F. W. Gilbert. *Representing Town Hall Promotion (Inc.):* Messrs: W. J. Cartwright, C. L. Martin.

The constitution of the committee provides for six representatives from the City Council, two from Waimairi County Council and Paparua County Council (which in 1966 amalgamated with the Halswell County) and one from each of the other Local Authorities. The original Town Hall Committee took the unprecedented step of inviting Town Hall Promotion (Inc.) to take three seats on the Committee. In 1968, this number was reduced to one, but this is still a unique and valuable provision.

1: In the Beginning

FOR all our virtues, we citizens of Greater Christchurch have our foibles, not the least noticeable of which is a penchant (those who do not care for us might even define it as a mania) for arguing the pros and cons of civic developments to a point where progress is slowed, or even halted. Examples of projects over which differences of opinion, ranging from polite disagreement to bitter wrangling, have occurred are almost legion. Among them are the siting of roads, railways, tunnels, ports, canals, statues, memorials, sports facilities, an art gallery, a floral clock — and Town Halls. If this is democracy at work, then the magnificent Town Hall which this booklet commemorates is surely the most democratic town hall in the world.

Let it be clearly understood, however that once the present site was nominated by an overseas expert, Metropolitan Christchurch witnessed an accord unsurpassed in the city's history. If the co-operation between architects and contractors set a standard in business relationships, then the mutual respect and helpfulness with which city, borough and county approached their joint responsibility set a pattern for future collaboration.

It is almost incredible that the oldest (by charter) and largest actual city and, at least musically and architecturally, the leading cultural community in New Zealand should have existed without an adequate and publicly-owned town hall for the whole of its 122 years. To be sure, Christchurch once boasted two assembly rooms, privately owned but universally accepted, and invariably referred to as 'town' halls. Even while they were in existence, their inadequacy was indicated by the use of Tattersall's, the old Drill Hall, the Provincial Council Chamber and even the Royal Hotel for functions more appropriate to the size and dignity of a proper town hall.

By strange chance, the opening of the present Town Hall missed, by just one day, being on the one hundred and fifteenth anniversary of the opening of our first 'nominal' town hall and, by one day, being on the ninety-ninth anniversary of the loss of both our earlier halls. On October 1, 1857, the first hall was opened and on September 29, 1873, rather dilapidated and scorched, it and its successor were auctioned. We can there-

fore say truthfully, and with what satisfaction we can extract from the fact, that 'it took us less than a hundred years to replace our Town Hall'. But only just.

Since the original halls disappeared various substitutes have been used, many of them inelegant, ill-heated barns. For a century, then, Christchurch has had to make do, rather self-consciously, with second-rate facilities when civic pride and the occasion demanded a rendezvous befitting the citizens, and their guests, of no mean city.

Now that, at long last, we have provided ourselves with a real Town Hall, it has proved in site, concept, design and construction, an architectural gem. This Town Hall complex, the first stage in what will ultimately be a magnificent Civic Centre, has features unsurpassed in this and, dare we suggest, in many another country. It may be selfish but entirely understandable to be glad that a smaller, less striking building was not erected twenty, forty or eighty years ago.

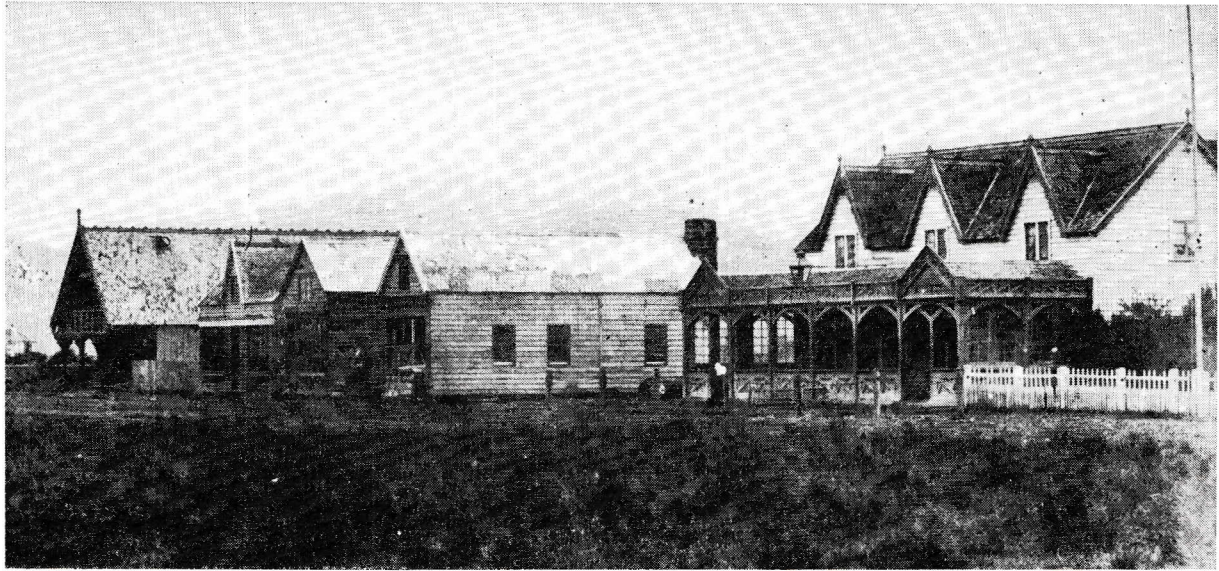
THE 'OLD' TOWN HALL

Probably on information received from Sir Christopher Bowen, Henry (later Sir Henry) Wigram in 1916 gave credit to James Edward Fitzgerald for proposing that a town hall be built in Christchurch. The earliest reference to such a proposal appears to have been an editorial comment in the *Lyttelton Times* of August 27, 1853, which stated:

'We understand that it is contemplated to erect by subscription a Town Hall in Christchurch. The want of a sufficiently large building for public meetings, balls and concerts has long been felt . . . Now that the Provincial Council is on the eve of meeting the need of a suitable building for their deliberations is even more a necessity.'

That last sentence suggests strongly that Fitzgerald wrote or inspired the paragraph because he was keen (as his efforts to decorate, fittingly, the first temporary Council Chamber showed) that the provincial legislature should adopt as much of the dignity, setting and procedure of the House of Commons as was possible.

The *Lyttelton Times* on September 17, 1853, recorded the setting up of a provincial committee comprising Charles Wellington Bishop, Thomas Cass, George Gould (Treasurer), Sir Thomas



THE OLD TOWN HALL (left) and WHITE HART HOTEL (right), Sumner-road (High Street), 7 a.m., February 1, 1859.
(A. C. Barker, courtesy, A. C. Loach)

Tancred, John Marshman, Richard Packer, Captain Richard Westenra and Joshua Porter (Secretary). It was estimated that £1,000 would be required for the project but, already, 400 colonists had each subscribed one pound.

At the Golden Fleece on October 27, Captain Charles Simeon presided over a meeting to decide on a plan and to select a section on which to place the building. The design chosen was that of H. J. Cridland, the surveyor, the decision being influenced, perhaps, by the fact that at an estimated construction cost of £700, it was not only the cheapest plan but the author was also prepared to take his fee in shares. Isaac Luck's plan was costed at £980 and E. Coxhead's at £955. Cridland's hall was 66ft by 22ft with a ten-foot gallery opening on to a covered porch which would serve the purpose of hustings. Two rooms below were to be united by a verandah which could be enclosed.

No decision was made about a site until a later meeting which, in Simeon's absence, was chaired by W. Guise Brittan. Three sections were considered, that of E. J. Wakefield (son of E. G.), Town Section 733, having three frontages on the Square, Colombo and Hereford Streets where the United Service Hotel stands today. The whereabouts of the sections offered by the firm of Longden and Le Cren and by (W.H.?) Read are not known, but the surprising comment that the former was expensive but less distant from the town than Wakefield's suggests it was probably in

Colombo Street, close to Market Place (Victoria Square). Jerminham Wakefield's section, valued at £50, was chosen and the decision made to start building as soon as 700 one pound shares were taken up.

In the event, the scheme fell through, though whether this was due to a lack of financial backing, to a difficulty in securing a somewhat confused title to the valuable section, or to a rise in the price, is not known. The fact that another meeting was called for January 14 'to consider another site' suggests the latter.

It was not until November 12, 1855, that a meeting at the White Hart Hotel made some progress with plans for a hall to serve also as a Chamber of Commerce and a literary and scientific institution at a cost of £800. On March 29 tenders were called by Thomas Hichens, Secretary, for the erection of a 'Commercial Hall, Mechanics Institute and General Assembly Rooms'. At the same time, Joseph Brittan, Treasurer, issued a call of one pound a share.

Another twelve months passed before, on April 4, 1857, there was news of the building being erected near the White Hart Hotel on land donated by M. B. Hart. There were three town sections on the south-west side of High Street between Cashel and Lichfield Streets, two of which, 895 and 897, were, on July 1, 1851, brought from the Canterbury Association at public auction for £46 (the pair) by Charles Day, storekeeper of Lyttelton. On September 30, 1854, Day

sold both sections to Michael Brennan Hart for £525 and on July 17, 1857, Hart transferred to the trustees of the Commercial Hall project a portion of land with a frontage of 46 feet and a depth of 129 links 'for divers good and valuable considerations.' These conditions included an agreement not to sell alcohol on the property nor to use it as a licensed house nor for any purpose inconsistent 'with morality or order.'

On May 1, 1860, an adjacent 38 feet, on which the trustees had almost certainly built at least one ancillary room, were transferred for £300. The title records that, on December 6, 1870, the frontages of 46 and 38 feet were found to total 85 feet. With a stone building overlapping the boundary, the trustees agreed to pay £200 for the foot-wide strip. Perhaps Hart was regretting his generosity of thirteen years before, or this reflected increased values but the price was much higher than the £80 per foot Stranges paid for the whole frontage in 1873. By contrast, Robert Watson, tailor, leased to the trustees a ten-foot frontage on the south-east of the old Town Hall for 999 years at one shilling per annum.

The Commercial Hall (referred to as the 'Town Hall' before it was finished) was, in principle and in size, very much like the one chosen for the 'United Service' site, though the plans were drawn by Luck and Mountfort, the latter's style being evident.

With dimensions of 54 x 26 feet (which may have excluded the two cloakrooms on either side of the entrance) it was considered 'very large', but even if it was, as likely, 66 feet overall, its area would have been only one-quarter of that of the Limes Room in the present Town Hall complex. The major source of light was through large windows in either gable, but other details can only be surmised from perusing the drawing (Page 9) which may have differed in detail from the finished hall. It is unlikely that the bay window, for example, was ever built. There was, at the south end, a low platform and at the north a gallery opening out on to a ten-foot wide balcony designed specifically as hustings — a platform from which candidates were nominated and elected, unless someone called for a poll. Below was an open porch but the balcony did not, as has been said, project over the footpath. Voters listening to the speeches by candidates and their proposers had the width of the Sumner Road (High Street) as well as the 'clear space' of the Triangle shown in the foreground. (Page 8).

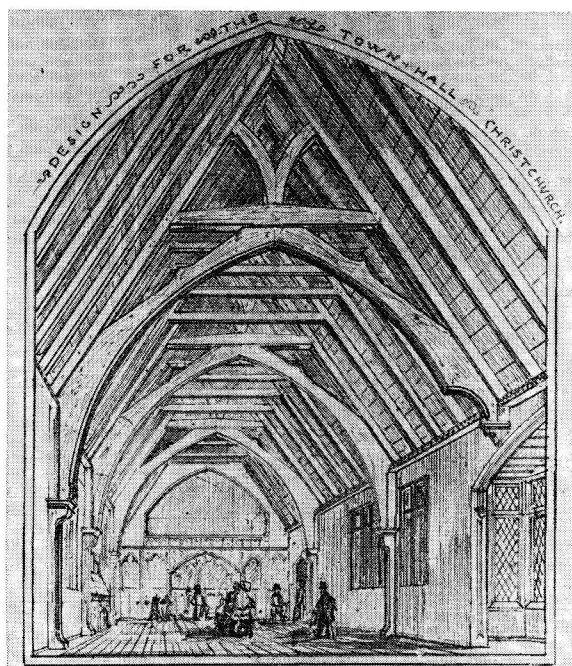
As early as August enlargement was already being considered, in particular a wing on the

north side, containing counting houses which Lyttelton merchants had offered to lease as offices for their businesses on the plains. No record of these and other additions has been found, but in 1859 William Wilson stated that five rooms were then being added, while in 1868 a 30 x 20 foot supper room was built on the south-end of the old Town Hall. Those on the west must have been removed when the second hall was erected.

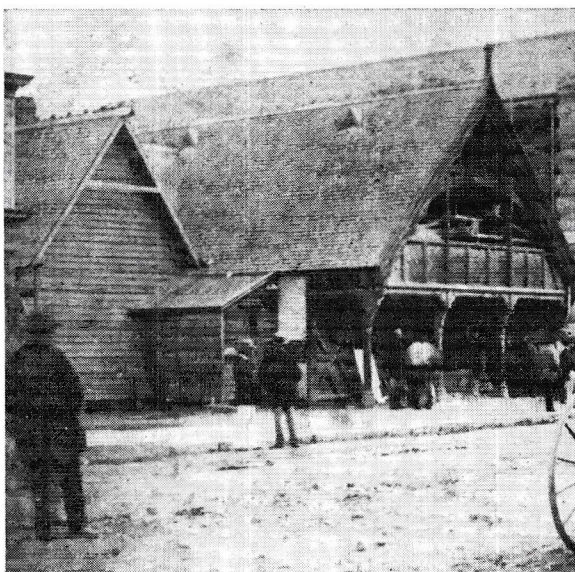
On September 19 it was reported that 163 investors had taken out five pound shares, the Provincial Council had given £300 and the cost to date was £653 13s 7d. The final cost was £780, leaving £335, which would have been largely absorbed by the additional rooms and offices.

Although the 'official' opening was celebrated by a concert, the hall had already been used. It had been expected that the first service the hall would render would be as a venue for the election of the Superintendent in the last week of October or the first in November. However, in September a meeting was held in the Town Hall (it could have been the Lyttelton one, the papers were often not specific) to discuss the formation of a Building and Investment Society.

The first use of the hustings in the old Town



INTERIOR, THE OLD TOWN HALL. An 1857 'design' by B. W. Mountfort which may have been altered by J. E. Fitzgerald. It is very doubtful whether the bay window was built. (From a sketch presented to the City by the late D. E. Hutton in 1941)



OLD TOWN HALL, circa 1868-70, showing two of the five or six annexes.

(Photograph, Alexander Turnbull Library)

Hall was for the nomination of candidates for the Superintendency on October 24, 1857, when the supporters of Joseph Brittan, whose colours were deep blue, and William Sefton Moorhouse (red, white and blue) all appeared to have gathered at the White Hart. When the Returning Officer, C. C. Bowen, appeared on the hustings with the candidates and their nominators and seconders, about 300 had gathered outside the Town Hall. Briefly told all the men on the hustings spoke, a show of hands was called for and showed 86 for Brittan and 105 for Moorhouse. The Returning Officer declared for Moorhouse, Brittan demanded a poll, this was granted and arranged for October 30. Moorhouse was returned.

In its brief review of the concert, arranged and conducted by C. Merton, the newspaper considered the instrumental pieces were better than the vocal items, singling out the cornepean solo by Richard Packer and especially the well-rendered overture from Gluck's *Iphigene en Aulide*. 'We can only hope,' said the paper, 'that those who have afforded a pleasure so much calculated to cultivate and refine the taste of the public will give many more such concerts in the fine Town Hall of Christchurch,' like that of September 29.

Charles Merton, musician and schoolmaster (at Rangiora) was to preside over a second opening (of the 'new' hall) seven years later. The *Times* reporter condemned the practice of de-

manding encores because they were a tax on the strength of the performers, who would soon cease to value praises when they were indiscriminately bestowed. It also, he thought, prolonged the performance; it may have been that the hard wooden benches had some bearing on the last comment. It would seem that the reporter also appeared at the concert marking the opening of the second Town Hall, because similar comments were made on that occasion.

The hall was used for a variety of purposes — for farewells, concerts, lectures, auctions, balls, vice-regal receptions and meetings on such diverse matters as railway development, gold discoveries, 'The Social Evil' and the formation of farmers' clubs, an acclimatization society, a pack of hounds and a home (boarding house) for single workmen. Professional stage performers such as that popular versifying balladeer, the 'inimitable' Charles Robert Thatcher, and his partner, Mde Vitelli; the English Opera Company with Mde Carandini, and the Christy Minstrels appeared in the little hall, but business was not really brisk. As a result, the shareholders were rather disheartened and bewailed the 'gratuitous' accommodation afforded the Provincial Government in return for its £300 contribution.

The company's fifth annual report pointed out that the Supreme Court had used the hall on 37 days and other official business accounted for another ten days. This, regretted the report, dated December 31, 1861, amounted to more than £100 in lost rent. When the second hall was opened a published summary showed that in the seven years of its life the 'old' town hall had been used by the Supreme Court on 460 days, by the Bankruptcy Court on ten days and for elections on 42 days. Generously allowing a discount, the trustees calculated that, at three guineas a day, the Government had received £1,612:10:0 for its £300. At the normal rate of five guineas per diem, the amount would have been £2,688.

Strangely enough, no reference was made to the use made by the Provincial Council of the Town Hall in 1858—and possibly the following year — before it moved into the original legislative chamber in the provincial wooden building on September 29, 1859.

THE 'NEW' TOWN HALL

In May, 1859 'W.W.' (doubtless Town Hall Secretary William 'Cabbage' Wilson) asked in the *Lyttelton Times* why it was necessary to contemplate the erection of a special building for the Mechanics' Institute, which had been using the

Town Hall. There were, he pointed out, halls belonging to the Masons, the Foresters and the Oddfellows as well as the Town Hall, and none of these were really busy.

It may have been to attract business from these other halls, it may have been a realisation of the miniscule dimensions of their town hall, but, at the meeting in December, 1861, the trustees were able to recommend that the hall be enlarged. Indeed there must have been some prior agreement, because they reported that they had already paid £267 of the £300 demanded for the adjacent land. The balance in hand was £102 18s 11d with another £300 subsidy promised by the Provincial Government—a gift which the trustees advised, reluctantly, they could do nothing but accept. These financial measures meant there could be no dividend that year.

Five months later (on June 14, 1862) came news of the enlargement. The little Tudor Hall was to be converted into a supper room and the three or four attached rooms into butteries. On the north-west side a great Gothic Hall (80ft by 35ft and 25ft high) was to be built with a handsome clock tower over the Judge's entrance at the south-east corner. The cost probably forced the abandonment of the clock tower. Indeed, it would appear that shortage of funds caused a skimping of a much more serious nature.

The next Annual Report, published on January 14, 1863, recorded a gradual increase in revenue from rentals, so much so that a dividend of 15 per cent was available but, again, it was decided to capitalise to enable extensions to be made. The Government subsidy of £300 was accepted, as was a design for a building drawn by George Mallinson, with an estimated cost of £1,600. but the plan was later rejected.

In August, the Town Hall Committee agreed to raise one hundred shares at £5, to use the £600 in hand and to borrow £500. The old shareholders, who had to accept yet another year without a dividend, were issued with one new share, gratis. The new building, it was declared, would be one of the largest and finest public halls in New Zealand.

Designed by S. C. Farr, who had been on the beach at Lyttelton to shake hands with J. E. Fitzgerald, the first of the 'Pilgrims' to step ashore, the new hall was 81 feet long and 34 feet wide, interior measurements. Its 26-foot walls were of stone and 32 inches thick for the first ten feet and above that were brick and eight inches thick. Architecturally, it did not meet with the unqualified approval of the *Lyttelton Times* music critic reporting the opening on Friday, September

16, 1864. He conceded that it was 'an excellent room for music', but the *Press* did better. 'A room more perfectly adapted for musical sound', it said, 'has never been built.' Apparently it was, acoustically, very satisfactory, but this characteristic was a matter of chance rather than calculation, since the shape of the building and its size were conditioned by the shape and size of the section built on.

The High Street facade was built of grey stone from the quarries of Thompson and Fogan and M. Ellis, with dressings of tufa (rough-textured volcanic rock) from the Burnside Quarry at Governors Bay. The side walls were of rubble from Gadd's Quarry (the business was well spread round), but the upper part of the walls was of brick). The roof consisted of wooden panels supported by elliptical iron girders supplied by John Anderson and painted blue with a cornice and corbels where the roof rested on the wall. Another, much criticized, cornice (on which it was intended to place lights) ran round the hall where it obscured the sills of the windows on either side and spoilt their proportions. 'Detestable and clumsy,' said our critic, 'and their effect ugly.'

The room was ventilated at the floor line, at the top of the lower cornices, between the windows at the roof line and by means of perforations in every panel in the ceiling. There were apparently two galleries, a small one for musicians playing at balls and another for spectators. The painting was done by Smith and Jones, whose premises were on the site of the present Town Hall, and the plastering by Foley Bros.

One interesting feature was an 'ingenious contrivance' by means of which a temporary stage could be erected for the accommodation of a large band or orchestra without injuring the walls or plaster. The orchestra on this occasion numbered between fifty and sixty although there was a weakness in the stringed instruments. One wonders, however, what the performers would have thought of an hydraulic stage coming up through the floor.

The lighting came in for criticism. The kerosene lights arranged in front of the gallery required more shading and more side lights were considered necessary. The lights arranged on the 'odious' cornice were safe and so, it was hoped, was the chandelier with its 'blob of light'. But the introduction of gas (the Gas Company had been formed in June) would, it was anticipated, solve all the problems of inadequate lighting, 'like a tavern parlour — the result of letting a tradesman, not the architect, do the job.'

Another interesting feature was a reference to

'those folding doors to the street.' Normal entry was apparently effected through the Old Town Hall which acted as a foyer and communicated with the new building, but the reporter was worried about the emergency doors on the street frontage opening inwards. This was a thoughtful observation. Perhaps the music critic was also a member of the volunteer Fire Brigade.

There were two reports in the *Times*, one on the Saturday, which was kindly and encouraging in its brief consideration of the hall and its briefer comment on the concert and one on Monday much longer and rather querulous. The second critic, from whom we have gained the picture above, wondered whether he had, indeed, spoken out too freely and might therefore be regarded as hypercritical. However, he spoke well of Mrs J. E. FitzGerald's German lieder and Mr Flood's accompaniment, although he suggested that, at an earlier concert at the Orphan Asylum, when she played her own accompaniment, Mrs FitzGerald had shown greater aplomb and artistry. He liked Mr Bonnington's skill on the violin, the cornet playing of the Kohler brothers and the fluting of Mr Wood, whom he considered a most valuable accession to the strength of the Society.

But of the singing, under Mr Merton, the critic was less flattering, suggesting that some organised school of music be instituted by the Musical Society so that the members could practise their scales for ten minutes before each meeting. 'An indifferent work (a chorus from *Lucrezia Borgia*) indifferently done, closed the performance.' Hard words but, who knows, these strictures may well have set Christchurch musicians on the hard path of endeavour which resulted in the city having choirs of acclaimed excellence. But the critic was not done. He hoped, he wrote in familiar strain, that it might be possible for the audience to refrain from accompanying the music with foot-tapping and that disallowed altogether might be the system of encore, then at such a height as to compel a singer to husband power for the inevitable repetition.

Although the *Press* came to the rescue by pointing out that the musical societies had been busy rehearsing for *The Messiah*, to be performed a week hence and therefore had had only one rehearsal for the concert, the paper suggested that 'the orchestra should play The Wedding March better — or give it up.' The paper also deplored that music societies could not go for long without some of their members taking offence and going off in a huff. The cause in this case appeared to be jealousy over who should be the

soloists, made more difficult by there being only one solo soprano part.

The exact details of the town hall complex, if we borrow a modern expression, are difficult to determine. Vague references to 'four or five additional rooms', and the absence of a plan, force one to guess what these were. A photograph (Page 13) shows a pitched-roof building on the east of the timber hall and what appears to be a ticket office. It seems another was added on the western side, but this was doubtless removed when the stone building went up.

Earthquake

In 1868 Christchurch experienced a series of earthquakes, but it was in the middle of 1869 that the first major 'earthshake' as some called it, was felt. The *Press* Supplement of June 9, 1869, carried a detailed account of the 'quakes'. The first, and most severe, occurred on Saturday, June 5, at 8 a.m., lasted for twenty seconds, creating widespread damage (mostly to chimneys) and 'alarm in the thoroughfare.' Mothers rushed tear-stricken children into the streets from their shaking houses.

In lighter vein, the *Lyttelton Times* recorded on June 18 that some wits enquired of their neighbours whether they could smell the sulphur associated with the earthquake. A considerable number confessed that they could.

There were further 'quakes' — about eight altogether — and in the absence of a seismometer, Dr Haast used the slopping contents of a milk can to conclude that the shake was from South to North.

The *Press* gave a comprehensive inventory of the damage done, the most spectacular being to a small brick house between Madras and Manchester Streets, which was 'shaken completely out.' China and glass trade shops were heavy losers, Knapman's in Papanui Road and Weir Bros. in Colombo Street being singled out. Cook & Ross were the heaviest losers among the chemists, while hotels to suffer were the Albion, Devonshire Arms, Junction and Collins's. Bakers' ovens were temporarily out of action and a chimney at F. J. Garrick's home fell through the roof, breaking several pier glasses. Among the more substantial brick and stone buildings to incur relatively minor damage were the Government Buildings (and especially the Council Chamber), the New Zealand Insurance Buildings, Matson & Son, the N.Z. Trust and Loan Company and the Supreme Court, the first stage of which was under construction.

No-one was injured and surprise was evinced



THE BIG AND THE LITTLE OF IT, c.1872. Nashelskis' 'Melbourne House' is now Ashby Bergh, Ltd. On the far left is the shop of Robert Watson, Tailor and Trousler maker. (Photograph, Alexander Turnbull Library)

that Anderson's Canterbury Foundry escaped completely. Oddly enough, no mention was made of damage to the new town hall and on June 10 a lecture was delivered there and other functions held over the next few months. It was not until September 2, 1870, that a report was made and the building officially declared unsafe, but this was after yet another earthquake at 6.23 a.m. on August 31, rated the most severe since that of June the previous year. Nevertheless, a versatile entertainer, Robert Heller, who specialised in 'Somatic Conjuring', played to full houses in September.

William Wilson, Hon. Secretary, Town Hall Directors, invited Edward Richardson (a partner in the firm of Holmes and Co., railway contractors and later Minister of Works) and Alexander Lean (architect) on the day following the earthquake to report on the safety of the Town Hall. In this he was motivated by the concern of Nashelski, the hardware merchant immediately on the west of the stone hall. The direct descendant of his business is the firm of Ashby Bergh, on the

same site. This places the position of the Town Halls. On September 12, 1870, the *Lyttelton Times* published their report together with another, probably commissioned by S. C. Farr, the hall architect, rather than by Wilson himself. Wilson's reference to the 'remarkable dissimilarity' of the two reports was rather an understatement. The public believed that the original plans had been altered at the last minute on the grounds of economy; Farr said when Richardson and Lean asked for working plans that they would 'have to go to Mr FitzGerald's head for them', since he had altered them so much. They got none, though Farr said they had asked only for those of the front gable. The second report was made by W. B. Bray (a surveyor) and E. G. Wright (a civil engineer and contractor), who had the benefit of the working drawings apparently denied their colleagues. The main point of difference was that Richardson and Lean considered the cracks in the fabric made the building unsafe; Bray and Wright, that they merely indicated settling; the former, that adequate

foundations were non-existent, the latter that the foundations were in excess of the London Metropolitan Building Ordinance requirements. Richardson and Lean commented on the effect of the heavy roof members on the walls, which both parties agreed were out of the vertical, but the other party made no comment.

In effect, this debate concluded with the sale on March 14, 1871, of the two halls and 'the large room in rear of the Old Town Hall, together with the shop now occupied by Mr Stewart.' The first and second town halls had cost £780 and £3,000 respectively, the land £500 and the supper room £200 — a total of £4,480. At the auction, L. E. Nathan bid £3,900 for the 26 perches and buildings but some difficulty over title resulted in the sale not being consummated.

Although the old Town Hall had been described as in disuse by the end of 1870, it was still occasionally used by G. L. Beath and Company, who were also the last occupants of the new Town Hall. Beaths used the buildings variously as bulk store and over-flow shop for the sale of surplus, bankrupt or damaged stock. The *Press*, on June 6, 1872, for example, carried an unusually bold advertisement:

D A M A G E D
BLANKETS AND FLANNELS,
EX DOVER CASTLE; AND ALSO
7 CASES WHITNEY AND REVERSIBLE COATS.
PURCHASED AT 50 PER CENT. DISCOUNT.
173 CHILDREN'S AND MAIDS' TWIFED JACKETS AND MANTLES,
1s 6d, 1s 9d, 2s, 2s 6d, 3s each.
250 CLOTH AND VELVETEEN JACKETS,
6s, 6s 9d, 7s 6d, 10s 6d, 11s 9d each
We would call special attention to our 11s 9d Cloth, worth 15s 6d.
160 LADIES' WATERPROOF MANTLES,
Splendid Value, 10s 9d, 12s 6d each.
GREAT BARGAINS!!
READY ON THURSDAY, 6TH INSTANT.
G. L. BEATH & CO., OLD TOWN HALL.

Others also used the buildings. Early in 1873, for example, Mitchell and Co., were using the new Town Hall as a wool store.

The Fire

At 9.50 p.m. on April 2, 1873, Constable Hughes, patrolling High Street, heard a crackling noise and saw a glow within the new Town Hall. He ran to the fire station in Lichfield Street to give warning. The ringing bell was picked up at the Market Place station but the Brigade there could see no reflections as a guide. The slate roof and bricked-in front windows must have held the fire in for some time. However, in three or four minutes, the hand engine, 'Dreadnought', and the Hook and Ladder Company from Lich-

field Street had arrived, and in five minutes from the alarm had water pouring on the flames from the tank by Matheson's Agency (across High Street). 'Deluge' arrived within 13½ minutes and 'Extinguisher' a minute later. The engines stopped pumping at 10.35, but not before part of the side walls had fallen in. There had been some danger to the old Town Hall on the South-East, which was empty, and to Nashelskis' hardware store on the other side.

Beath's stock was valued at £4,000 but was insured with the South British for only £1,000, Nashelskis' for £800. The liquidators of the Town Hall Company had a cover with the London, Liverpool and Globe of £800, the premium on which had been paid just the day before.

Arson was suspected, the door of the old hall which, as explained, communicated with the new, being open during the evening although the stone building had been locked up and checked at the end of the day's business. The fire occurred on a Wednesday, but the ashes continued to smoulder and the engines had to be called out again on the Saturday morning to damp them down. But the Tudor-style little hall which, sixteen years before, had been 'the handsomest wooden building on the Plains', stood scorched and derelict beside 'the biggest and finest public hall in the colony' of a decade earlier.

The Sale

The town hall section of 26 perches, with a frontage of 85ft, and a depth of 86ft was auctioned in the new Oddfellows' Hall, Lichfield Street, on September 29, 1873, by C. C. Aikman. Probably encouraged by John Ollivier's introduction and the champagne supplied, bidding was brisk until M. Harris's opening offer of £5,000 reached £5,900, when one or two retired and the price crept in one hundred pound bids to £7,000, when it was knocked down to R. Strange, on behalf of Strange and Company.

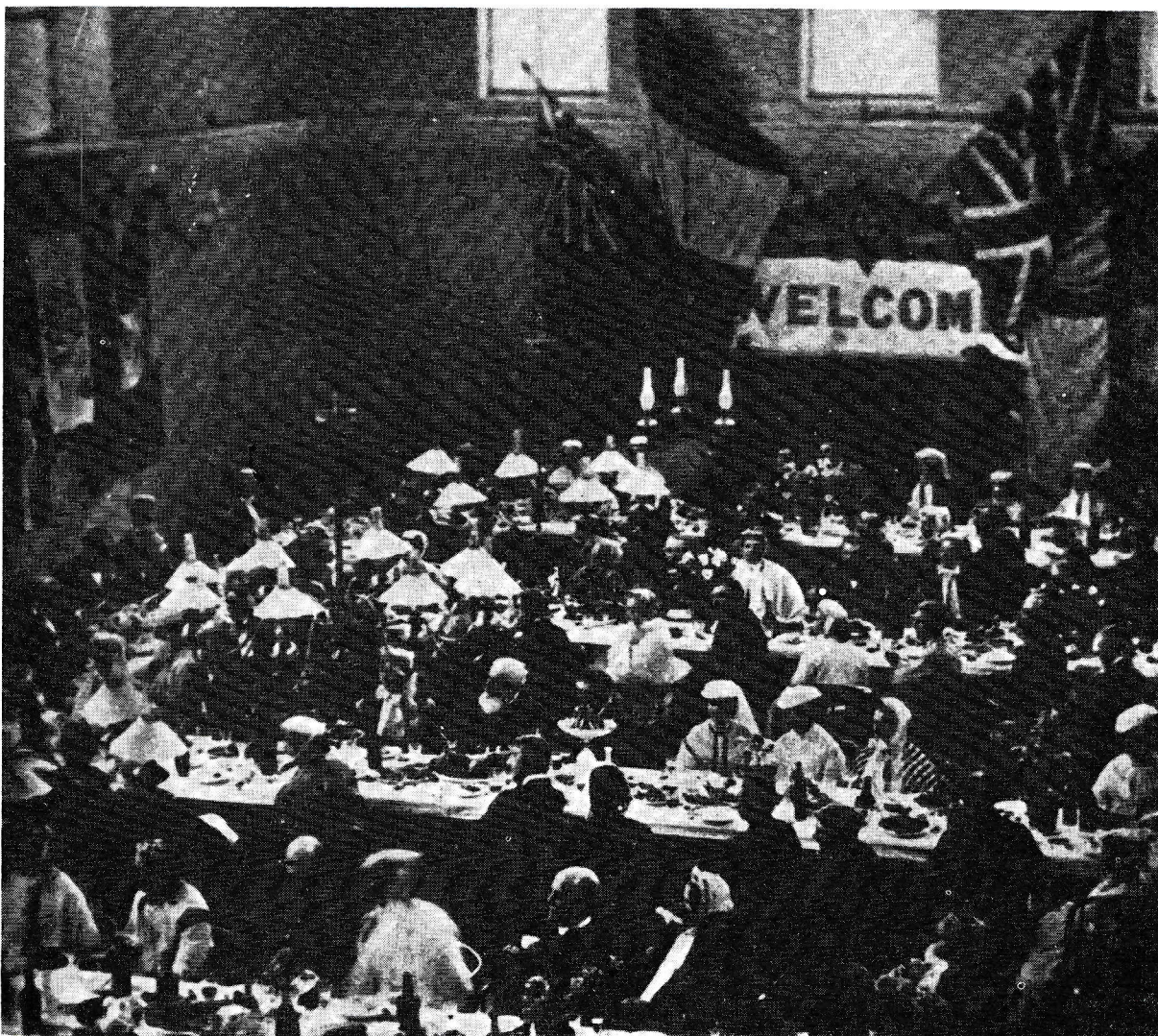
The spectators and participants then went through to the actual site where Strange paid £210 for the brick and rubble which represented the second town hall and John Anderson bought back his seven wrought-iron elliptical girders for £20. William Rankin secured the supper room for £37 while the delightful, if derelict, Old Town Hall and the two remaining side rooms went to one Hemmings for £33. What happened to the romantic little anachronism is not, at present, known. The price paid for the land, the equivalent of £43,077 per acre, was exactly 14 times what was originally paid for it, while the amount

paid for the buildings was almost exactly one-fourteenth of their original cost.

Before the year was out another meeting was mooted on December 15 to discuss, not the building of another town hall, but of an opera house. This must have been a little too ambitious because there appears to have been no immediate follow-up of this proposal.

But the last of the twin halls was not yet heard. By 1874 Stranges had built on their new land and on June 14 a final meeting of shareholders

was called to complete the liquidation of their £7,000. Apparently some members of the company had been involved in mutual litigation, no doubt over the sharing of the balance. Under the persuasive influence of John Ollivier, who strongly condemned it, the members agreed to reject litigation and to appoint R. J. S. Harman to pay out the shares (less costs, which were to be shared pro rata) when the Court was satisfied. William Wilson said the value of the shares would probably be £12 each.



PILGRIMS' AND PRE-ADAMITES' BREAKFAST TO LORD LYTTELTON, his son the Hon. G. S. Lyttelton and Mr Henry Selfe, attended by 200 settlers who had arrived in Canterbury before the end of 1850, was less affected by the flood than had been the formal dinner the previous evening. Held at noon on February 6, 1868, in the New Town Hall, it was regarded as a return for the Association's breakfast to the 'First Four Shippers' on board the *Randolph* at Gravesend on July 30, 1850. This view, taken without the benefit of flash, looking south, shows five of the seven tables set up, the Guests of Honour being along the eastern wall.

(Photograph from the A. C. Barker Collection, Canterbury Museum)

2 : The Years Between

MAKING DO

FORTUNATELY for the citizens of Victorian Christchurch, the Oddfellows' Lodge at this time was building a new hall in Lichfield Street between Colombo and Manchester Streets. This was a useful building, 90 feet by 36 feet, well-designed by W. B. Armson, with the fire station conveniently next door (fire was an ever-present threat). It was the venue of many civic functions, including at least one vice-regal ball and many public meetings. The young Nellie Stewart with her father and sisters played there along with other 'respectable' stage shows.

The Drill Hall on the eastern end of the present barracks site and running north and south, was opened on January 1, 1865. It served some non-military purposes, including the housing of our first exhibition in 1872. Burned down in 1903, it was rebuilt in its present form (in 25 days) in 1905 and, as the King Edward Barracks, has proved a 'life-saver' on many occasions. Fairs and fetes, exhibitions, Anzac services, boxing tournaments, graduation ceremonies, symphony concerts, including those by the Sydney and Melbourne orchestras, lively political meetings — all these, and many others, have been held in this immense barn. Pan-Pacific Festivals found the Barracks disguised as 'The Festival Hall', thus bewildering citizens who thought they knew their city. An even greater moment of glory came in 1963, when a concert was presented for the entertainment of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh. Fortunately, it did not rain that evening.

In the late 1870's a livery and bait stable in Gloucester Street was converted to a skating rink (hence the Rink Stables and Rink Taxis when it returned to the transport industry) and used for other forms of entertainment, including promenade concerts.

The Choral Hall, originally 'The Temple of Truth' of that imposter, Arthur Bently Worthington, provided a stage for concerts, from Band of Hope to Liedertafel, as well as for political meetings.

Opened in 1888, at the height of the 'rinking' craze, the Palace Roller Skating Rink, later and better known as the Colosseum, was the scene of a Vice-Regal Ball, an inter-provincial Brass Band contest and political meetings as well as other events — circuses and races between cyclists and

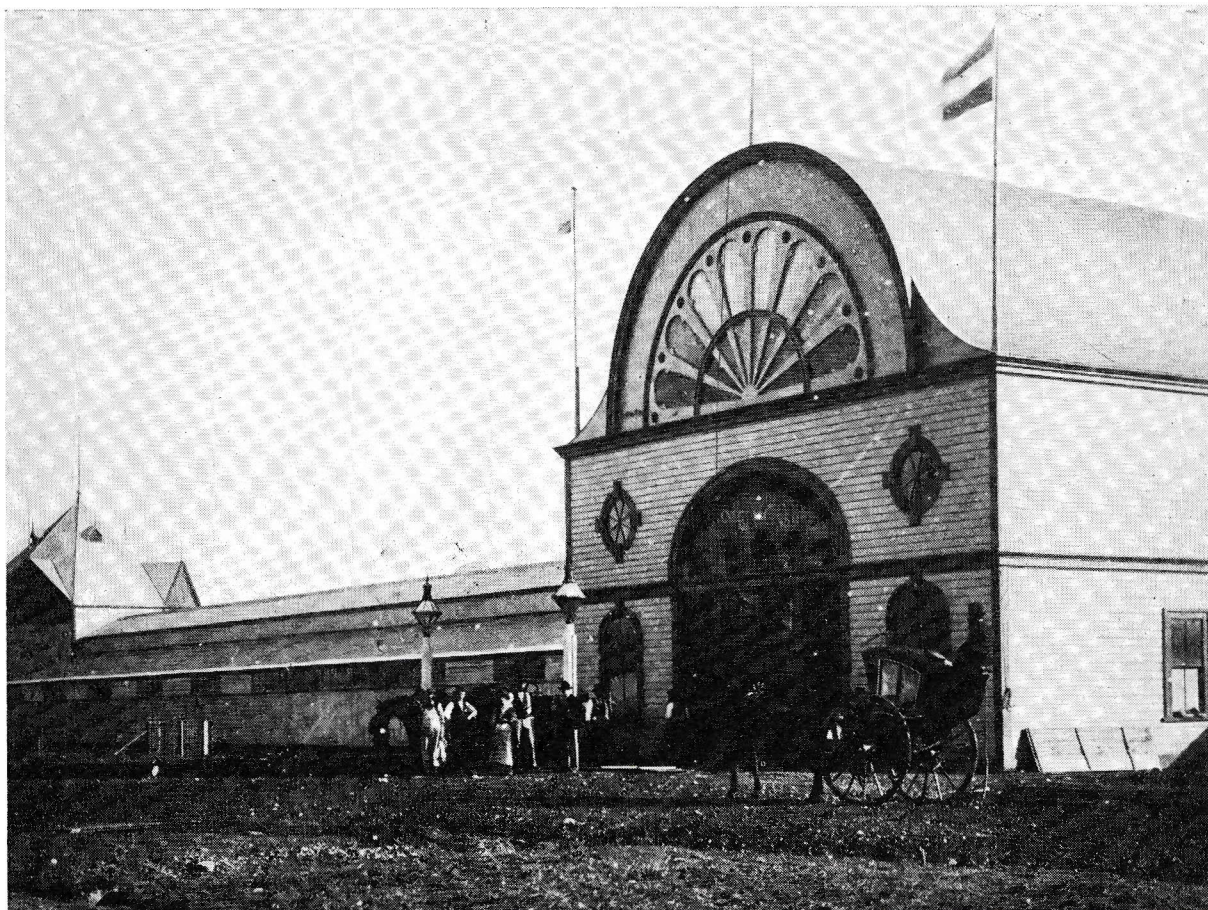
skaters, for example — not usually associated with town halls. Built by Daniel Reese who used 'the electric light' to work two eight-hour shifts a day, its skating floor, 190ft by 69ft (nine times the area of the old Town Hall) made it too large for regular use for anything other than skating, as O'Brien's boot factory (1893-1901) and for the screening of silent pictures by Fuller Brothers. It was pulled down to make way for New Regent Street in 1929. It may have been, when built, the finest skating rink in Australasia but it was not town hall material.

In more recent times Canterbury Court, well out of the central city area, has been used in lieu of a town hall — notably for the Civic Music Council's highly successful 1965 presentation of *Belshazzar's Feast*. The N.Z.B.C. Orchestra and the Royal Christchurch Musical and Christchurch Harmonic Societies' choirs, conducted by Sir William Walton did much, on this memorable occasion to make the audience forget its surroundings.

UNREQUITED ENDEAVOUR

It would take considerable — indeed, intimidating — research to record all the occasions on which some individual, some group or some local body, tired of inadequate substitutes, suggested that a town hall be built. Michael Brennan Hart, the first Mayor of Christchurch to wear robes and a chain of office said, on his induction in December, 1873, that he hoped to see another town hall built in his year of office. More than seventy years later, Sir Ernest Andrews (Mayor, 1941-50) said that he did not expect to see a hall built in his lifetime. There has always been a wistful desire that the city should possess such an amenity and, perhaps, status symbol, but for years the city council response to demands for a civic centre was often, if not usually, 'What will the rate-payers say? In 1945, the chairman of the City Council finance committee admitted that he did not have a long-term scheme for a town hall — 'it is a very long term scheme.'

There were times when this wistful desire developed into a general agreement that a town hall was indeed needed; in some cases there was even a degree of unanimity on the site and plans were actually produced. The outcome of all this — disappointment and no town hall. Fifteen years ago, however, the cry went forth: Let us raise the



ENTRANCE, N.Z. INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION, 1882. The transept, containing an art gallery, 130ft 'concert room' and a fernery, was suggested as a ready-made town hall

(*Photograph, E. Wheeler and Son, courtesy Canterbury Public Library*)

money first and leave the other aspects until later. To be fair it should be added that by this time the City Council was funding a small amount annually towards a town hall, but the decision of a self-appointed body to raise, voluntarily, a substantial part of the cost was a definite turning point in the story. The horse was being put before the cart.

Let us look briefly at half-a-dozen efforts, up to this turning point, to make good a major civic deficiency.

United Service Site Again

In 1863 the Bank of New Zealand purchased Town Section 734 for £1,700 compared with the £50 at which Section 733 on the other side of Colombo Street had been valued in 1853. The Bank had built on its new site in 1866, and before long the 'bottle-neck' effect on traffic was

being felt. To counter this, in July, 1875, the city proposed purchasing a ten-foot strip on the Colombo Street frontage of Section 733, then owned by R. M. Morten, who had paid £3,750 for it and claimed to be earning £2,000 per annum in rents and ground rent. Another estimate placed his returns at between £1,000 and £1,300. When the Council extended its plans to take the whole block for city council offices and a town hall, Morten became even more determined not to sell. In March, 1877, the City Council held a public meeting in a packed Oddfellows' Hall to discuss the proposal, but met with considerable opposition led by W. H. Wynn-Williams, founder, executive and champion of the Ratepayers' Association. He objected strongly to any idea of taking the property under the provisions of the Public Works Act passed the previous year. A similar objection was to be made in connection with an-

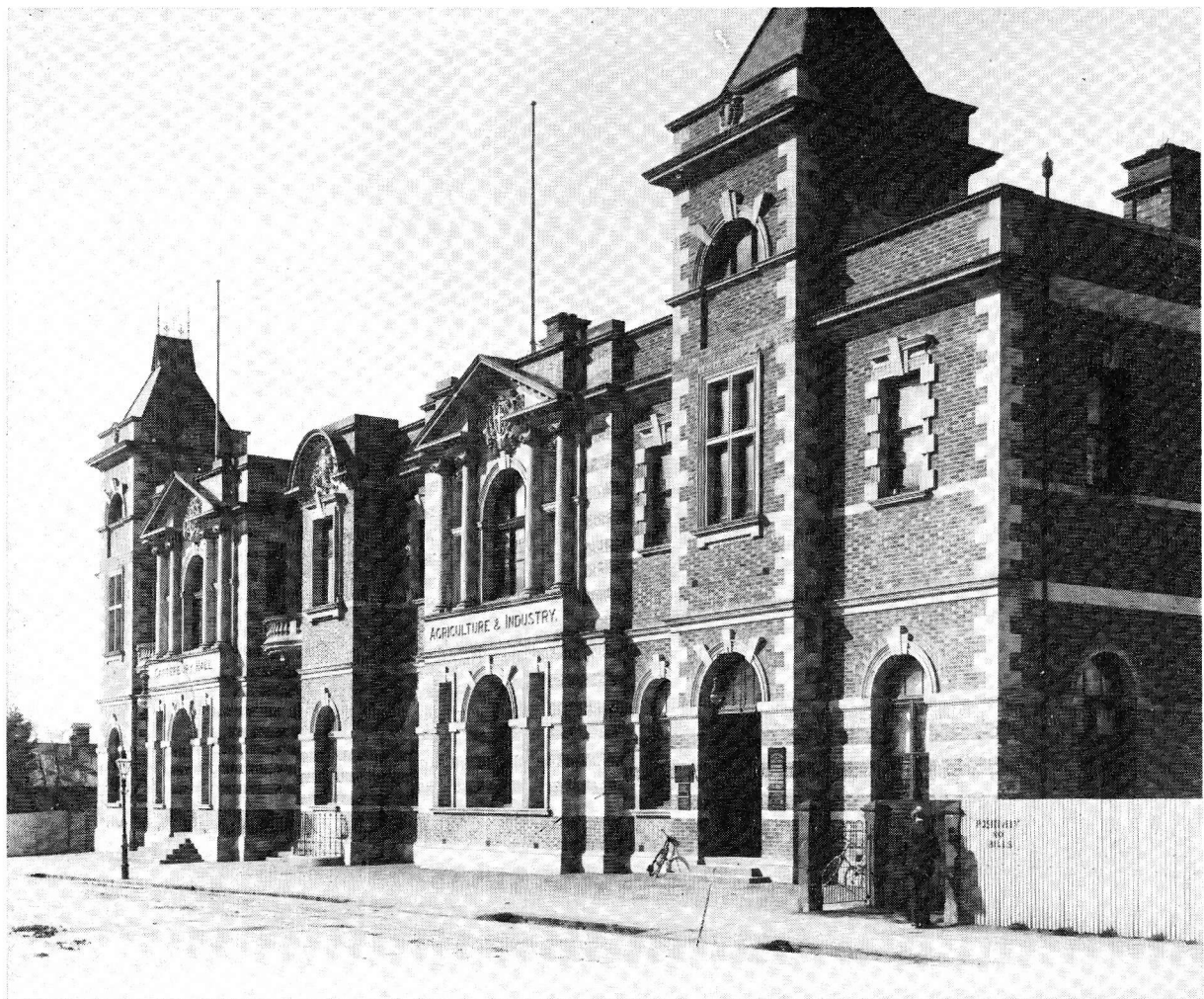
Addington Burgesses, protested strongly against any public square or park being used for a town hall.

The Town Hall Committee (J. McCullough, H. D. Acland, J. McCombs, J. R. Hayward, A. S. Taylor), thirteen months later, on April 27, 1914 recommended that the City Council should adhere to its original site. Since the archives yield no further reference to the scheme, it would appear that the 1914 war put an end to the project and on July 5, 1920, that the Council rescinded its 1913 decision to build a town hall on the 1879 reserve.

Manchester Street

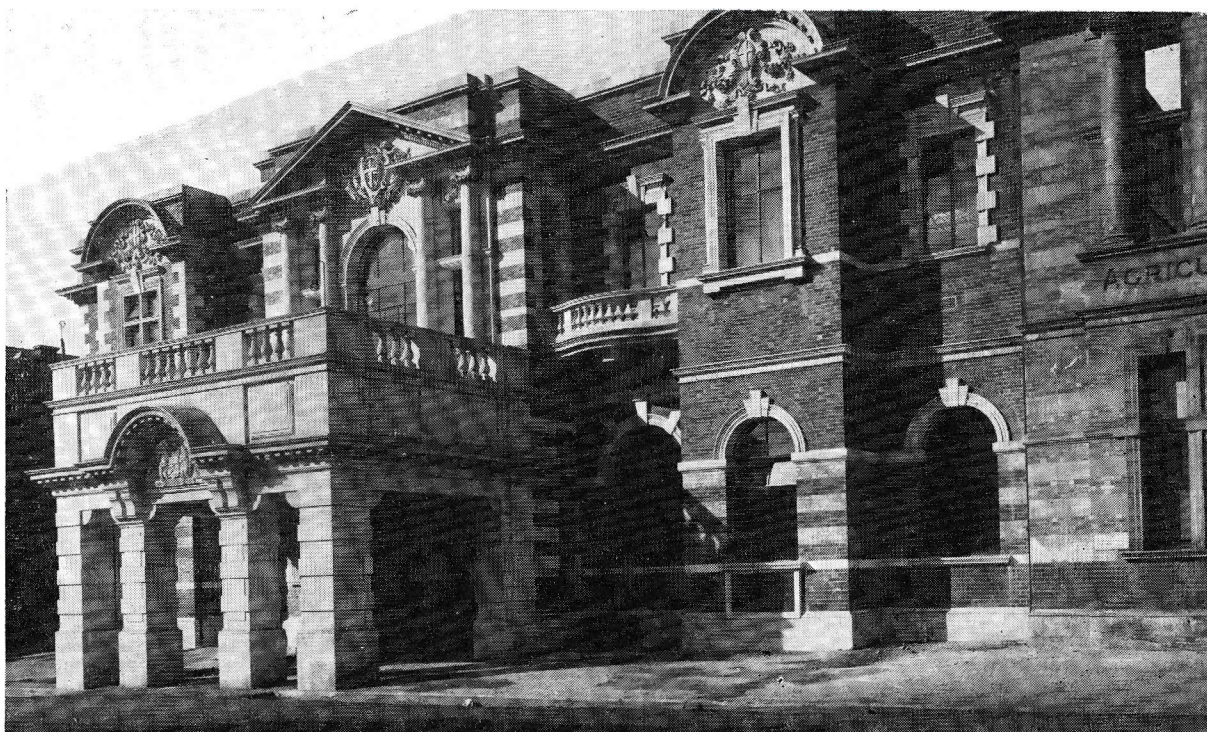
'You talk about not having a hall', said Duncan Rutherford of Amuri, 'Why not do something?'

and he gave the assistant A. & P. secretary £500. With this start, the combined Industrial and Agricultural and Pastoral Associations purchased, for £6,500, the 2½ acres of 'The Pines' and demolished the home of Dr Prins. The Industrialists, who had £2,000 from their 1895 Drill Shed exhibition, wanted a permanent 'museum and the A. & P. needed a venue for their winter show. Together, in 1900, they built for £20,000 a 14,000 sq. ft brick complex designed by Clarkson and Ballantyne and constructed by Rennie and Pearce. On the north was the Canterbury Hall, 102 feet by 70 feet. Here, on October 2, was performed *The Canterbury Jubilee Ode* written by O. T. J. Alpers with music by Maughan Barrett, of Wellington, while in the rest of the building and in temporary annexes, the combined Associations



CANTERBURY HALL (c.1902) with Alexandra Hall on the right.

(Photograph, Marks, From Alexander Turnbull Library)



CIVIC CHAMBERS, December, 1925 with roofless offices and Alexandra Hall (re-built as Concert Hall, 1928) on right. The portico was removed in 1948. *(Photograph courtesy of Christchurch Press)*

staged their Jubilee Exhibition.

A few years after the Jubilee the owners were glad to have Hayward's Picture Enterprises christen the hall 'His Majesty's Theatre'. It was here that the first 'talkies' (gramophone records synchronised with film of vocalists) were presented. Here, too, was housed Christchurch's first civic organ.

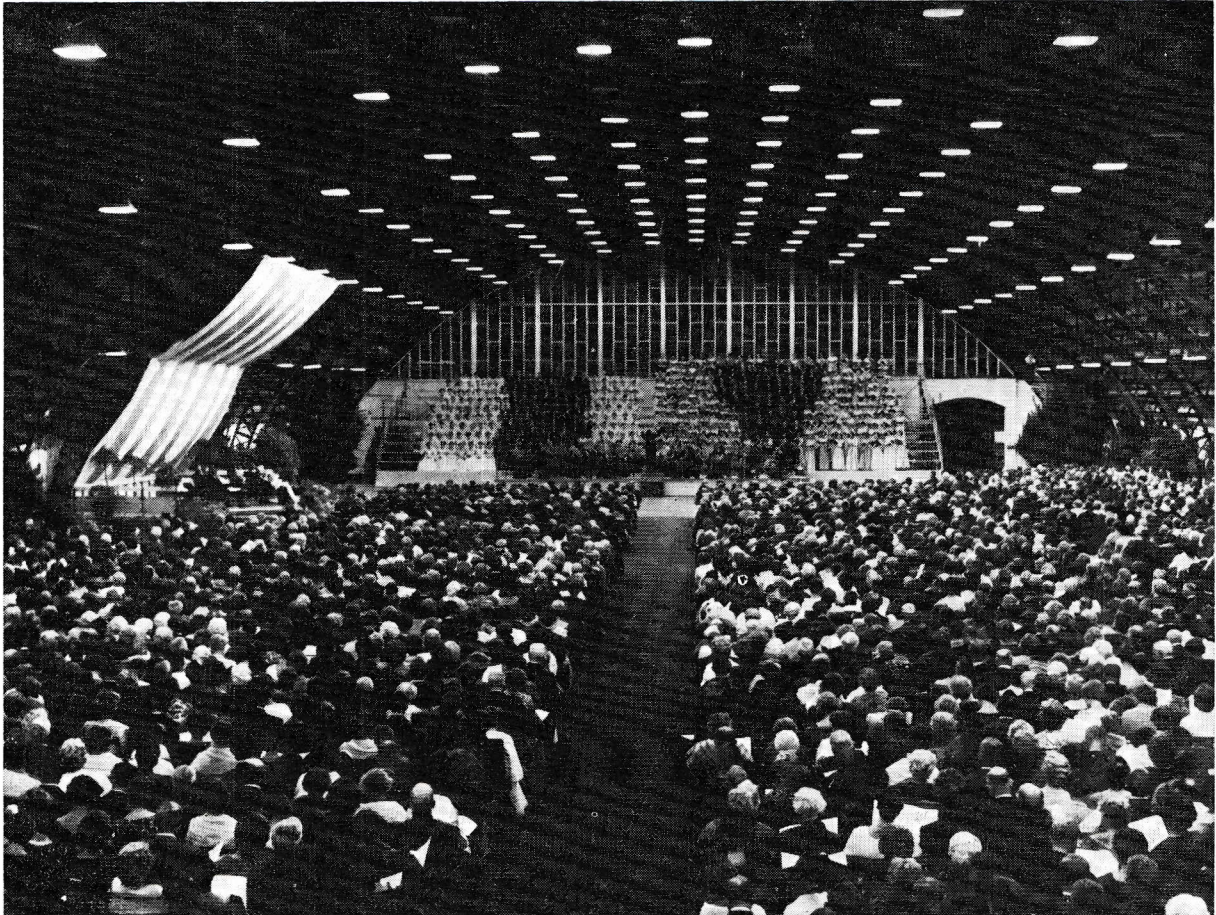
In 1900, an energetic newspaperman sought the opinions of prominent citizens as to what they thought was a suitable memorial to mark the Jubilee. Bishop Grimes suggested taking over Canterbury Hall as a town hall. Others supported the idea but when, in 1902, a formal proposal was made, the Council would not entertain the idea.

A proposal was made in 1916 to raise £27,000 to buy the block for £20,000, take over the £10,000 mortgage and spend £6,000 on renovating the adjacent Alexandra Hall for desperately-needed accommodation for the Town Clerk and his staff. In 1917 several meetings were called to explain the scheme to the ratepayers but they finally turned it down — perhaps fortunately, as the whole complex was gutted on November 11. Much of the walls stood and the facade, slightly altered, is today the front of the Civic Chambers

and the Civic Theatre. In a referendum in May, 1920, however the ratepayers agreed to the purchase of the site (and ruins) for £15,460, the voting being 1232 to 538. In September, the following year, they voted in favour of building the council chamber and municipal offices at a cost of £50,000 but rejected two other proposals: to build a concert chamber (£50,000) and to purchase the Limes site (£60,000) for a future town hall. Finally, in March, 1923, by a margin of less than one per cent, they agreed to a loan of £35,000 with which to build a concert hall on the Alexandra site.

Designed by Dawe and Willis and built by W. Williamson, the Civic, from its proximity to the Mayoral suite, made a useful venue for civic receptions but it proved less than satisfactory for presenting large choirs and a symphony orchestra. This, in spite of being described at its opening as 'the finest concert hall in the country'. In fact, the Civic Theatre, as it soon became known, had to be skimped by the omission of front offices and dressing rooms, etc., because the Council was reluctant to go to the ratepayers for a further loan to meet higher costs.

The Christchurch Concert Hall was opened on March 17, 1928. The Municipal Chambers had



ROYAL OCCASION. The King Edward Barracks, February 16, 1963, when Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, and the Duke of Edinburgh attended the concert given in their honour.

been opened on September 1, 1924.

The second Town Hall Committee was set up by the City Council in July, 1925, to negotiate with the Government an exchange of the Alexandra Hall site for the Provincial Council Buildings and site. The intention was to submit to ratepayers a scheme for erecting on the site and overlooking Victoria Square, a town hall, art gallery and concert hall in keeping with the style of the old buildings. Fortunately, the Government refused to trade on this basis. The City had had its eye on the Provincial Buildings (or their site) since at least 1911 and particularly during the mayoralty of Henry Holland (1912-19) whose ambition it was to secure them for Christchurch. However, in 1928, the stone buildings and the original wooden legislative chamber were vested in the Canterbury Provincial Buildings Board as a memorial to the early settlement and government; the remaining wooden portions came under the Board in 1971.

In November, 1929, Dr H. T. J. Thacker made the last abortive effort in the 1920's when he moved that the City Council should take the freehold of the Limes site for a town hall with provision for an Art Gallery at the eastern end. The siting of the McDougall Art Gallery was under debate at the time.

Between economic depression and war, there was little reference to town halls in the 1930's. Nevertheless, in July, 1937, the City Council received a deputation from the Coronation Commemoration Committee which asked that a town hall be built to mark the accession of George VI. Later in the year, the acquisition of the Limes site was again proposed and there was talk of a civic centre but no action was taken.

In 1944, with the war coming to an end, thoughts turned town hall-wards again, the first Council move being to call for a report on the relative valuations of the block on which the Civic Chambers stood and the Limes area. It was re-

ported that a Government department was considering building on the Limes site but, in any case, the Council expressed a preference for the 'Latimer' site, a preference it was to hold for nearly a dozen years.

In the mid-forties, too, came the first of the suggestions, promptly quashed, to use Municipal Electricity Department profits to finance a town hall. This idea almost certainly came from the example of Dunedin where an impressive building had been erected debt-free, thanks to profitable trading departments, including a city-owned hydro-electricity plant — and a very successful International Exhibition in 1925. But interest was becoming keener. Cr L. G. Amos, in 1947, asked if a poll could not be held with the November elections to determine public opinion while L. F. de Berry later interviewed 44 of the candidates and reported that 38 would support the setting up of a fund to build a town hall. A committee was set up to formulate a Ten Year Plan for Council Projects and the offer of the Canterbury Branch of the Institute of Architects to assist in planning a Civic Centre was accepted. The Town Clerk and City Engineer were instructed to prepare ground plans and a layout of a town hall on the Latimer site, though the Engineer expressed

a preference for the Limes. Nothing positive appears to have developed from this activity but it and animated newspaper correspondence indicated the feeling which was coming to the surface.

Perhaps the need for a town hall was best underlined by R. S. D. Harman, heading a deputation from the Committee for Civic Beautification, who asked for a temporary, 3000-seat, pinus and asbestos hall in Hagley Park, as a fore-runner to a town hall but to be built specifically for the proposed Royal Tour. Also in mind were the demands of the Provincial Centenary two years away and the exhibition being talked of as a possibility in 1953. One other event stands out in the 'forties. On August 19, 1947, the Council recorded, anonymously, a donation of £2 towards a town hall.

In the 1950's we come into more familiar country, discussed in the next chapter, the most important feature being a swing away from Latimer to the 'Library' site, recommended by the Institute of Architects and Miss Nancy Northcroft. Interestingly enough, as things transpired, the Post and Telegraph Department indicated in 1947 that the City Council could have portion of this land if it so wished.

3 : The Beginning of the End

THE HORSE BEFORE THE CART

As we have seen, the citizens of Christchurch have dreamed, on and off, for a hundred years of providing themselves with a town hall and have, war and depression permitting, woken up periodically to make an effort to realise their dream. Until now the dreams have evaporated because, although general agreement on the need has been reached, a site has sometimes been agreed on and even plans drawn, reality in the form of the old question: 'Where's the money coming from?' has brought the scheme down from the clouds. City Councils which should have taken a positive lead have quailed at the question: 'What will the rate-payers say?'

A Town Hall, finer than anything our forebears dreamed of, stands proudly overlooking Victoria Square because, for once, the horse was put before the cart. A substantial part of the money was raised by the people themselves before a plan was even commissioned. To a degree it can be said that, led by a group of enthusiasts, the people forced the City Fathers into action. Why?

The tremendous success of the Centennial Celebrations of 1950 (a dream in technicolour if ever there was one) reminded Cantuarrians and the people of Greater Christchurch, in particular, of the achievements of a relative handful of pioneers. The provincial birthday provided not only inspiration but also a challenge.

The organisers of the Celebrations had been handicapped by the lack of an appropriate venue for some of the activities planned as had, and were to be, organisers of royal tours and entrepreneurs who had to by-pass the City rather than ask world-renowned artists and groups to perform in the bleak barracks or the inadequate Civic Theatre. In many quarters, shame was felt that, with two of the finest choirs in Australasia domiciled in Christchurch, they could perform with an orchestra only in make-shift conditions.

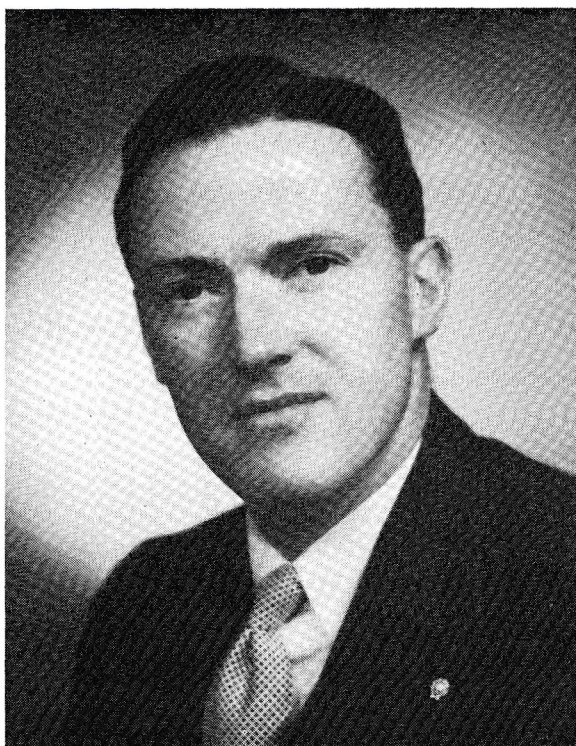
The desire for a town hall was surfacing again and, quite fittingly, it was the Christchurch Harmonic Society, prompted, it is understood, by its noted conductor, Victor C. Peters, which on February 25, 1949, lodged with the City Council the sum of £100 towards the cost of a town hall. With another donation of one pound and accruing interest, the fund amounted to £115 15s on March 31, 1956. In 1956/57 the 'official'

Town Hall Fund received not only £155 conscience money but also a healthy injection of £55,908 15s 1d from Sinking Fund surpluses. This action by the City Council reflected growing, if not widespread, interest in the community, as did the motion of Cr H. P. Smith's finance committee the following year to fund £10,000 per annum as a transfer from the General Account—a practice which continued until the 1968 Empowering Act altered the tempo of money raising.

As early as November 30, 1954, J. W. Jameson had referred, at a meeting of the Christchurch Chapter of the Junior Chamber, to the importance of a Town Hall and Civic Centre for the city. Although enquiries were made within the country and overseas about the building and financing of town halls, the move to do something did not get off the ground, but a tentative proposal in 1956 to form a Greater Christchurch Development Council to co-ordinate the activities of like-minded bodies and with the building of a town hall as one consideration, did bear fruit.

H. E. Radley, President-elect of the Canterbury Progress League, an organisation which has alternated periods of great and profitable activity with, if not moribundity then occasional phases of gentle quiescence, invited past presidents and former senior executives of the Junior Chamber to join the League. The latter's constitution was altered to make this possible and about forty Jaycees who were passing or had passed the age limit for membership of the Junior Chamber made the move. Among them were Peter B. Watts (formerly President of the New Zealand Chamber and of the Junior Chamber International), R. E. Smith and B. J. Drake.

At a meeting of the League on February 6, 1957, E. F. Ward presented a recommendation from the Public Relations Committee that the League undertake a campaign to ensure the early building and completion of a Town Hall for Christchurch and surrounding districts. P. B. Watts, supporting the recommendation, suggested it was time that Christchurch should stop talking about the lack of a town hall and, if it really wanted one, do something about it. Why, he asked, couldn't the Progress League do something? True to service club custom, R. T. Doig then moved 'That the League set up a Town Hall Promotion Committee under the convenership of Mr P. B. Watts, Mr Watts to recommend the



P. B. WATTS, Chairman, Town Hall Promotion, 1958-59.

membership of that committee to the next meeting of the League.'

The first Meeting of the Town Hall Promotion Committee was held at the Convener's home on February 26, 1957, those present including H. E. Radley (ex officio as president, Progress League), E. F. Ward (vice-president of the League) and D. W. Bain (League secretary), K. H. Bartlett, W. F. McArthur, H. G. Hay and R. J. Dendle. The committee decided to concentrate on the question of a town hall and to ignore both siting and the provision of a civic centre. The meeting agreed that Christchurch *must* have a town hall; it must be an accomplished fact in a reasonable time, and every possible endeavour would be made to formulate public opinion and gain public support with a view to co-operation with the City Council and an early undertaking of the project.

At subsequent planning meetings it was decided to set a target of £150,000, an indication of support was solicited from 50 local business and cultural organisations, and a thoughtful report on the provision of a town hall was received from J. L. Hay. The target fluctuated, often unofficially, from what was thought an unrealistic £250,000

to the final £100,000, with figures of £200,000 and £150,000 appearing. Reports were received from other centres on fund raising for their halls; from America indicating the techniques of professional fund raisers; on the possibility of securing one-quarter of consumers' electricity discounts and a scheme for workers to contribute one shilling a week through deduction from wages. The advisability of widening the committee into a fully representative citizens' sponsoring committee to be formed, perhaps, at a public meeting called by the Mayor, was agreed to and invitations were sent to 107 organisations and to 216 individuals.

The inaugural meeting of the Town Hall Sponsoring Committee was held in the Council Chamber on September 30, 1957, under the chairmanship of His Worship the Mayor, Mr R. M. Macfarlane, C.M.G., M.P.

On December 2 a constitution, drawn up by Miss Nancy Northcroft and M. W. Simes and B. J. Drake, provided for the adoption of the name 'Town Hall Promotion Inc.' This was adopted at the following meeting held on March 24, 1958, J. L. Hay being elected President and P. B. Watts Vice-President.

The Canterbury Progress League, in line with its policy of launching schemes for the good of the community rather than actually implementing them, had done a grand job for Christchurch. Although the league was always interested and co-operative, the work involved in bringing the town hall into being, at this point passed into other hands.

The following were the first Officers and Committee:

President: J. L. Hay.

Vice-President and Chairman: P. B. Watts.

Deputy-Chairman: W. J. Cartwright.

Chairmen of Standing Committees: H. G. Hay, J. L. Hay, J. F. Skedden, P. J. Skellerup.

Secretary-Treasurer: H. R. Pool.

Hon. Auditors: Burt, McGillivray & Mann.

General Committee: S. G. Annand, D. W. Bain, L. F. de Berry, A. R. Blank, J. J. B. O'Connor, F. R. Cullen, J. I. Colligan, C. H. Cook, E. R. Field-Dodson, T. D. Flint, W. P. Glue, Professor Vernon Griffiths, G. Guy, D. J. Hewitt, J. L. Hewland, L. T. Loversidge, A. W. Mann, Miss Ngaio Marsh, C. L. Martin, T. Martin, O. C. Mitchell, W. S. MacGibbon, R. H. Mackenzie, Miss Jean McGregor, A. Nettleton, Miss Nancy Northcroft, J. L. Norton, Miss E. R. Overton, N. R. Parkes, R. G. Sheppard, C. C. Smith, M. W. Simes, E. F. Ward, Dr H. Jenner Wales, C. B. Wells, M. J. Wellwood, E. F. Wilde.



'MYSTERY' ENVELOPES being shuffled by 'Jaycees' and friends, using conveyor belts in the Ovaltine factory, Papanui, November, 1960.
(Photograph, courtesy, P. D. Dunbar)

In those early years, Town Hall Promotion was very active. Indeed it did so well that having reached its target of £100,000 in 1961, it lifted its sights again to the figure of \$250,000 which had been envisaged by the Sponsoring Committee. When on 1st July, 1972 the Society handed over the balance of its funds to the Town Hall Committee, it had raised just a few thousand dollars short of \$500,000. There is no doubt that in the first three years when it raised \$188,000 (nett) it ensured that a Town Hall would be built. Town Hall Promotion was very active in soliciting direct cash donations and in many fund raising projects including a Vice-Regal Floral Festival Ball (\$716), a Fair and Mardi Gras (\$10,956), Vanishing Tea Parties (\$874), a Rugby match (\$1,260), Civic Music Council concerts conducted by Sir William Walton (\$3,242), a raffle for a seaside section (\$1,826), etc. A special grant of \$50,000 was received from the Golden Kiwi, due largely to the representations made by the then Minister of Finance, Hon. H. R. Lake, who had earlier been convenor of a Special Gifts Committee in the approach to business houses.

A house-to-house appeal known as 'Operation Doorknock' was held on November 1, 1958 and raised \$24,418. This involved a tremendous amount of detailed organisation and considerable help was received from schools throughout Christchurch in providing collectors.

The various Service Clubs of Christchurch — Rotary, Lions, Jaycees and Round Table, all assisted Town Hall Promotion in various ways in its fund raising activities, and two projects in particular, both involving Mystery Envelopes, resulted in substantial additions to the Fund. In 1961 the Junior Chamber raised \$43,165 and three years later the Lions Club of Christchurch raised another \$18,132 — both efforts involving thousands of man hours.

It is perhaps unfair to particularise but the extraordinary performance of the Junior Chamber of Commerce (and the firms which supported them) merits brief mention. This was the first attempt at 'mystery envelopes' in Christchurch but it is doubtful if any other money raising effort has surpassed it. Never has the energy, enthusiasm and organising ability of the Jaycees been seen to better advantage. Under the direction of P. D. Dunbar, president and J. M. Tocker, campaign manager, work began 43 days before sale day but within three hours all the 306,000 envelopes had been sold at 2/- each. People queued as early as 6 a.m. to make purchases, so fair and so valuable were many of the prizes. Jaycees in speedy vans under radio control, travelled from selling point to selling point, redistributing stocks to keep up with the demand where it was strongest.

By the end of 1972, Town Hall Promotion



'BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST'. On May 7, 1964, G. A. G. Connal (Chairman Civic Music Council) on left, handed to C. L. Martin (Chairman of General Committee, 1959-68 and Vice-President, 1960-68, of Town Hall Promotion) on right, a cheque for £1,600, the proceeds of the Sir William Walton concerts on March 5 and 7 in which Sir William's oratorio 'Belshazzar's Feast' was featured.

(Photograph Christchurch Star)

will almost certainly have reached the target it earlier feared was too ambitious — \$500,000. By August 23, \$176,311 had been received in direct donations, \$50,000 from a 'Golden Kiwi' grant, \$111,456 from various money-raising projects and an impressive \$169,056 in interest. Against this interest must be set a total of gross expenses of \$20,788 (an average of only four per cent of receipts in each of the 14 years). This gives a balance of \$486,035 to which must be set \$12,000 well in sight and it is not being optimistic to expect that another 2,000 will 'turn up' to round off the half million.

At the Fourteenth Annual General Meeting on July 1, 1972, it was decided to keep the Society in existence in order to handle bequests made to it for the Town Hall. At this meeting, appropriately the first ever held in the Conference Room, the following Officers and Committees were elected.

<i>President:</i>	H. G. Hay
<i>Vice President:</i>	W. J. Cartwright
<i>Hon. Treasurer</i>	L. A. G. Rich
<i>Hon. Secretary:</i>	W. R. Davies
<i>Auditors:</i>	Morris, Patrick & Co.
<i>General Committee:</i>	H. G. Hay (Chairman), D. W. Bain, K. H. Bartlett, V. M. Busby, P. D. Dunbar, Miss B. B. Evans, E. R. Field-Dodgson, G. Guy, G. D. Hattaway, A. S. Hollander, A. MacKenzie, A. W. Mann, C. L. Martin, P. W. Mason, R. C. Neville, Miss N. Northcroft, N. G. Pickering, H. R. Pool, M. B. Restall, M. W. Simes, C. C. Smith, R. H. Stillwell, C. B. Wells.
<i>Executive Committee:</i>	H. G. Hay (Chairman), D. W. Bain, V. M. Busby, G. Guy, A. W. Mann, C. L. Martin, Miss N. Northcroft, C. B. Wells.

METROPOLITAN CONCORD

While Town Hall Promotion was being evolved and getting to work raising money, the City Council had not been idle. In 1955, a 'Town Hall Committee', not for the first time, had been set up and in the 1957-58 financial year, on the motion of W. S. MacGibbon, a transfer of £10,000 from the General Account to a Town Hall Fund, had been made although the previous year a proposed transfer of £5,000 had been rejected. This funding enabled the site, when the time came, to be purchased without difficulty.

It was a small beginning but the calling, on

November 19, 1958, of a 'Conference on City Amenities' attended by representatives of the City Council, Riccarton Borough and Waimairi, Paparua, Halswell and Heathcote county councils, was an even more important step. Discussion centred on the matter of a town hall and was purely exploratory but it was the beginning of an accord without which such a town hall might not have been built in this century. It is interesting to observe how often some person or circumstance arises in this story about which the same thing could be — and has been — said. Fortune seems to have smiled on the project.

This (1958) meeting was not followed up until July 31, 1963, by which time the site had been selected and bought. There followed a series of meetings to examine possible costs and methods of financing the undertaking. Because of domestic commitments and difficulties some local bodies were hesitant in committing themselves but when an acceptable basis was found they readily joined the consortium. In 1964 the Paparua County Council suggested a means of reducing the cost of a town hall. The plan was to fund, pro rata, the sum of £72,688 (estimated as the annual charge on a loan of £1,100,000) for five years and to raise a ten-year loan of £600,000 at a similar cost. Taking into account interest on the funded money, it was calculated that the scheme would enable a hall to be commenced within five years and would, at the same time, save the rate-payers £1,326,000 compared with the charges on a 35-year loan of £1,100,000. The amount actually funded was fixed at £50,000 per annum, each local authority paying in proportion to its population and capital value. When funding, which commenced on April 1, 1965, was completed, the Christchurch Town Hall Committee had a balance of more than £300,000 (\$600,000) nett.

A loan of \$1,800,000 was applied for on April 29, 1968 but, because of the existing building restrictions, the Local Body Loans Board on June 25 deferred the loan for twelve months. On July 17 a deputation, consisting of Cr H. G. Hay and the City Treasurer (L. A. G. Rich) made further representations in Wellington and consent to a 1.8 million dollar loan was granted on August 6. Because of increasing costs, a further loan of \$300,000 was sanctioned on August 5, 1969 while consent to a third (supplementary) loan of \$210,000 was applied for on July 19, 1972, to meet escalating labour and other costs.

Total loans, therefore, amount to \$2.31m. With \$.5m from Town Hall Promotion, an



THE FIRST . . . Mr A. R. Guthrey, Mayor of Christchurch (right) receiving from Sir James Hay, President, Town Hall Promotion, the Society's first gift of \$75,000 towards the Town Hall at the Laying of the Foundation Stone, February 12, 1969.

(Photograph Christchurch Star)

amount in excess of \$.6m funded, and interest being earned, the estimated final cost of \$3,500,000 is covered.

Rather remarkably, when the opportunity was given for ratepayers to object to the raising of the loan, not a solitary voice was raised against the proposal.

While the deputation was in Wellington, the opportunity was taken to make representations to the Local Bills Committee in support of the Christchurch Town Hall Empowering Bill. It was rather unique for local authority contributions to be paid to the central authority and validating legislation was required for this, since a joint special loan did not allow for review of the basis of contribution. The Empowering Act which was finally passed was an improvement on the original bill which was seen through the House by Cr the Hon. R. M. Macfarlane, M.P.

The Empowering Act was put into effect on August 17, 1971, when the Mayors and Chairmen, Town and County Clerks, signed a deed agreeing to share all costs incurred in constructing, furnishing and maintaining the Town Hall and the servicing and repayment of the 35-year loan. These payments are to be made to the Christchurch City Council which was recognised as primarily responsible for such debts. It set out the constitution of the Christchurch Town Hall Committee. Christchurch City to have six, Waimairi and Paparua (which had absorbed Halswell) two and other councils and Town Hall Promotion, one representative each. The Committee was also

given power to make rules and decide charges for the Town Hall. Excess money from contributions over loan charges up to March 31, 1971, and from excess revenue over operating costs are to be off-set against loan charges. The land was paid for, of course, by the city which will be fully responsible for any municipal administrative buildings placed there.

In considering the contributions of the Metropolitan Local Authorities, the part played by their less populated and more distant neighbours must not be overlooked. The county councils have paid, or are paying, voluntary grants of the following amounts:

Akaroa, \$100 (plus the gift of aggregate for the exterior panels); Amuri, \$300; Ashley, \$1,500; Cheviot, \$200; Ellesmere, \$1,000; Eyre, \$500; Kaiapoi Borough, \$500; Oxford, \$1,000; Rangiora, \$1,000; Rangiora Borough, \$500; Wai-para, \$600 and Wairewa, \$150.

These much appreciated contributions from outlying areas amounted to \$7,350.

Overseas visitors have not only been greatly impressed by the siting, the design and the construction of the Town Hall but also by the relatively modest cost of such a facility. The cost of a complex not 1331 miles away has been quoted by way of comparison.

In the middle of 1971, attention was turned to the question of a manager for the Town Hall and by August 16, a schedule of duties had been drawn up and a scale of charges for the hire of

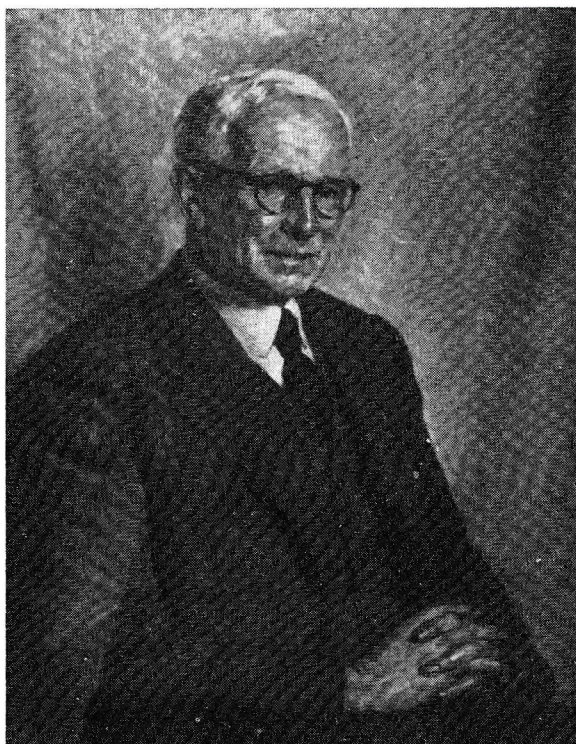


AND THE LAST. W. J. Cartwright (left), Vice-President, Town Hall Promotion, handing to H. G. Hay, Chairman, Christchurch Town Hall Committee, a cheque for \$409,700, virtually the balance of the T.H.P. funds, July 1, 1972.

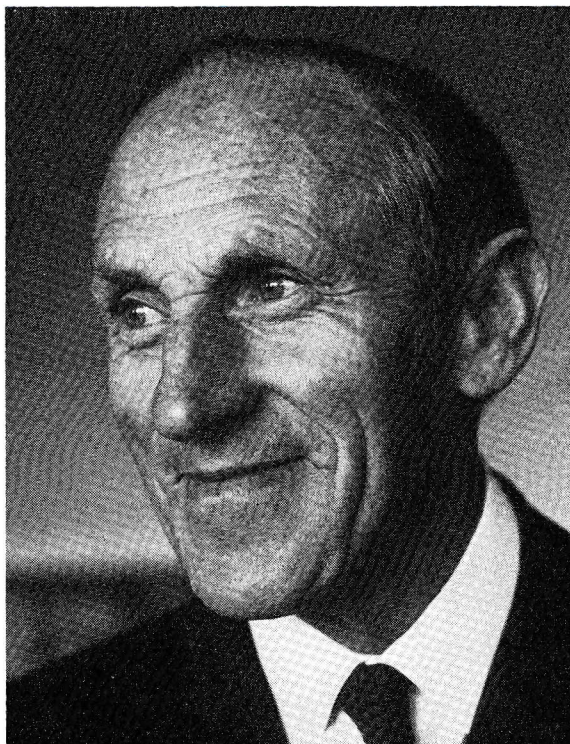
(Photograph Green and Hahn)

the various facilities agreed upon. In November the Canterbury Progress League made a recommendation that the Public Relations Office should be made responsible for the promotion and administration of the complex. This found little favour, it being considered that the post required full-time, specialised attention. Finally, from 35 applicants, B. Patrick Connell, the young 30-

year old secretary-manager of the Bowl of Brooklands Trust, New Plymouth and public relations officer of that city was selected. He arrived in Christchurch at the end of March, 1972, and immediately showed a comprehensive, enthusiastic and an experienced grasp of his responsibilities.



SIR JAMES HAY O.B.E., President Town Hall Promotion Inc., 1958-71.
(Portrait by Archibald Nicoll, courtesy of Haywrights Ltd.)



CHARLES L. MARTIN, Chairman General Committee, Town Hall Promotion, 1959-68.
(Photograph Christchurch Star)

4 : The Battle of the Sites

As money for the hall began to accumulate, the question of the best site was raised again, and in 1960 and 1961 newspaper correspondents had a field day. The City Council, advised by the Canterbury Institute of Architects, had decided in March, 1955, to use the attractive Cambridge Terrace frontage between Hereford and Worcester Streets. This would at least encroach on, if not absorb, the land occupied by the Public Library and the Canterbury Club, but not the site of St Elmo Courts. To the West lay the University and cultural precinct more or less enclosed by the Avon, which at this point boasted its widest and most attractive banks. In 1960 the Canterbury Club indicated its refusal to sell and maintained this decision even when the price offered was raised from £50,000 to £75,000.

The Star led a strong attack against the use of the 'Club' site and letters, many more noticeable for their heat than their light, poured into the papers. Former Promotion Chairman P. B. Watts felt constrained to write from Sydney, in a letter printed in *The Star* on January 21, 1961: "I have been delighted and dismayed — delighted at the effort of so many in reaching the goal of £100,000 and dismayed at the continuing division of opinion on the question of the site which, if persisted in long enough, can only destroy the greatest public sponsored effort in the history of Christchurch . . . I often wonder if all those people who have written letters on the question of the site have ever thought about joining Town Hall Promotion (Inc.) and doing something constructive."

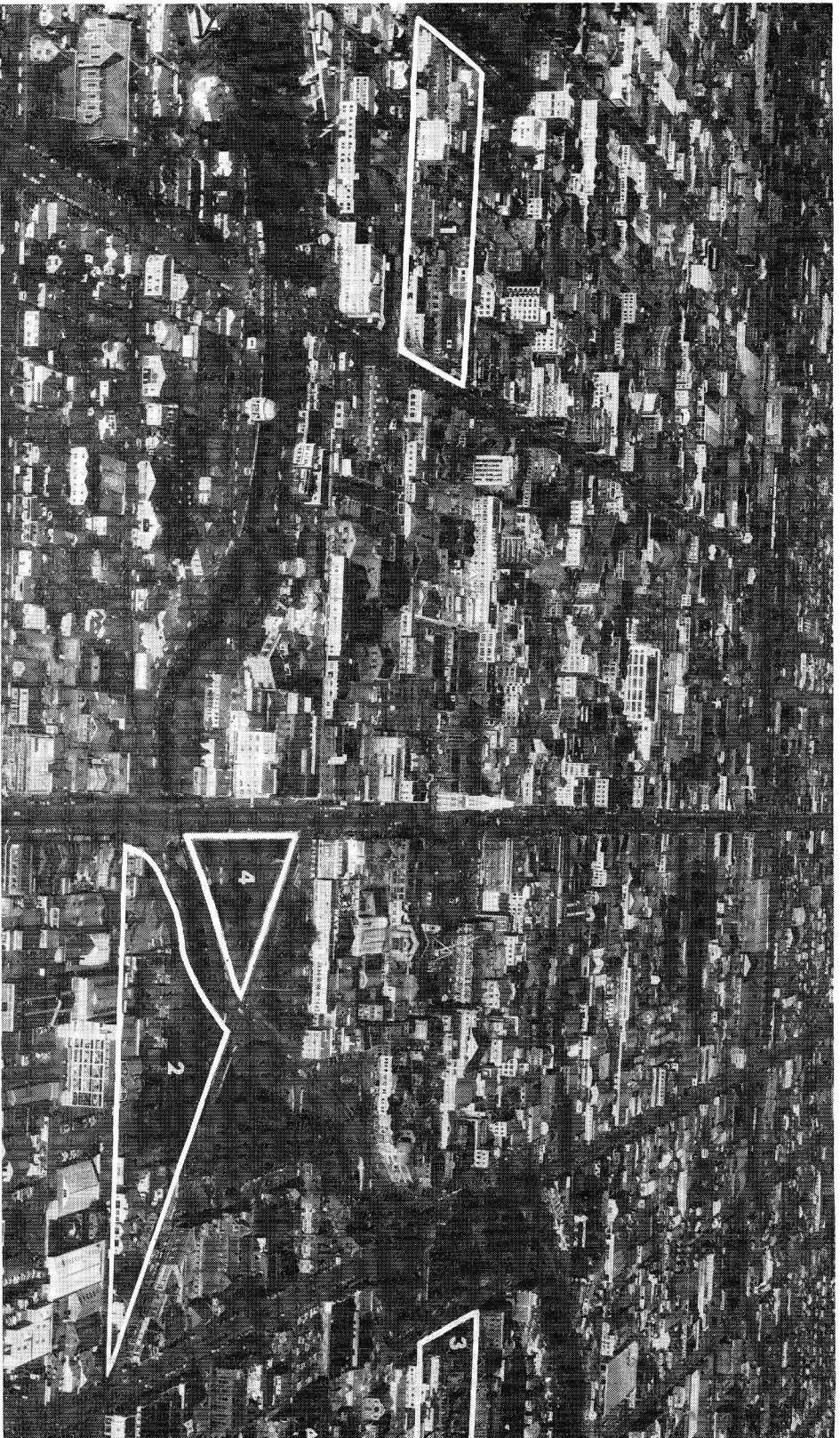
In the meantime the Canterbury Club and Mrs A. M. E. J. Clifford, who owned an acre of the land required, lodged an objection against the Council's having designated the Worcester-Montreal - Hereford Street - Cambridge Terrace block as a reserve for a civic centre and a town hall. The case was heard by the Town and Country Planning Appeals Board on February 8 and on March 2, the Chairman, Mr F. F. Reid, S.M., handed down the Board's decision. This drew a distinction between 'zoning' and 'designating' areas and ruled that a local authority should zone the whole area and then indicate on the map the location of public reserves, hospitals, etc., and also proposed reserves, proposed motorways and proposed civic centres. The Council's scheme should therefore be amended to provide that the

club's property should be zoned Commercial B for a depth of two chains on The Terrace and Commercial C for the rest of the club land and all that of Mrs Clifford. It was not called upon to decide which, of the various alternatives, was the best site but had no hesitation in ruling that the site under discussion was suitable for the designated purpose.

This decision left the way open for taking the land under the Public Works Act (we are back to 1877) and City Councillors, reluctant to invoke the Act, joined the agitation to refer the choice of site to a referendum. The reason for this change of heart was obvious, but fortunately the matter was not resolved in this way. *The Press* pointed out that 'Since the erection of a large commercial building in Kilmore Street had made 'The Limes' site quite unsuitable, the only practicable alternative appeared to be the Manchester block bounded by Gloucester and Worcester Streets and Latimer Square. A "Gallup" Poll commissioned by *The Star* had shown that 48% of those questioned favoured a site facing Latimer Square (whether this included the many who wanted a site *on* Latimer Square is not clear), 19% on the 'The Limes' site, 16% in Hagley Park facing Park Terrace and 15% the 'Club' site. As it was shown later that the Latimer site was twice as expensive as either of the others and was 'physically and psychologically' facing the wrong way, we can be grateful that the Council was not committed to this site before wiser counsels prevailed.

Town Hall Promotion was concerned that continued debate would affect donations to its cause and claimed that many had given on the assumption — which the Society had always accepted — that the hall would indeed be built on the oft-chosen Cambridge Terrace site. It brought bricks round its head when it suggested — 1877, again — the calling of a public meeting so that the virtues of this particular site could be explained and the air cleared. In this they had the support of the Town Hall Committee, with whom representatives discussed the matter on November 29. This was to be a meeting to inform, not to discuss and naturally met with strong opposition from the Latimer protagonists.

In the event, the meeting, which was to have been called early in 1961, did not eventuate. Instead, the Town Hall Committee of the City



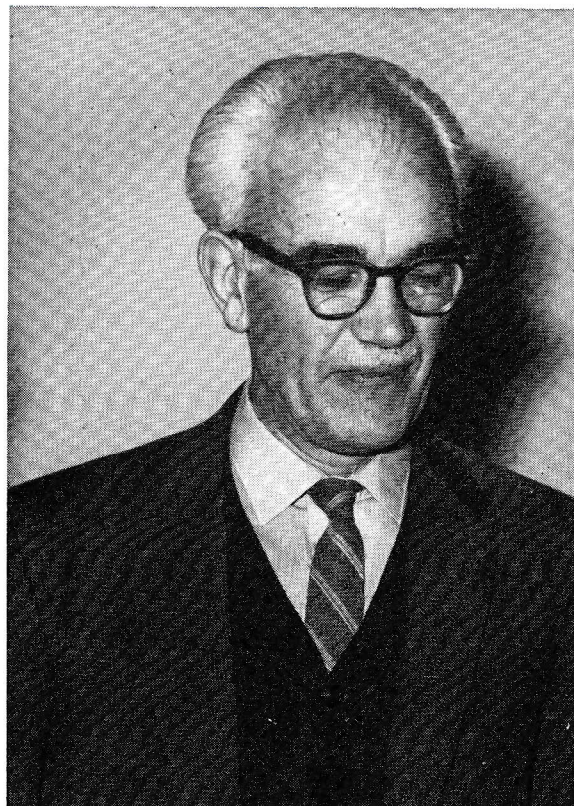
LATIMER, LINES OR LIBRARY? Of the dozen sites known to have been suggested this century, one, Market Reserve (No. 4) was discarded more than 50 years ago. Three others, Latimer, Lines and Library (Nos 1, 2 and 3) were the most frequently suggested and were in fact, Professor Stephenson's 'finalists'. Each is a quarter-mile, more or less from the Cathedral, the Library being the closest and the Lines, by no more than 100 yards, the furthest.

Council, under the chairmanship of Cr H. P. Smith, recommended that Sir William Holford (now Lord Holford), Professor of Town Planning at the University of London and noted for his work in planning the rebuilding of the precincts of St Paul's and his pilot plan for the capital city of Brasilia, in Brazil, should be invited to come to Christchurch to advise on the best site for the city's town hall. Miss Nancy Northcroft, Regional Planning Officer, deserves credit for this imaginative step. In 1953 she had made a compelling assessment on the virtues of what she called the "river precinct" as an area for development for civic cultural and educational purposes. The River Precinct was the Cambridge Terrace block carried right back to Rolleston Avenue. It was largely on this report and support by the Canterbury Branch of the New Zealand Institute of Architects (who were also to prove of great assistance in arranging the Architectural Competition) that the City Council decided on what was variously described as the Library, the Club and the Cambridge Terrace site. In March, 1960, Miss Northcroft in her private capacity had suggested engaging an overseas expert to Town Hall Promotion, who decided to put it forward to the City Council.

Inevitably, there were objections to the proposal — many of us tend to decry "experts", especially from overseas (part of the 'Kiwi's' do-it-yourself syndrome?) — but, in retrospect, this decision can be seen to have been one of the most momentous steps towards the realisation of our hopes and dreams. Unfortunately, Sir William, though willing, had prior commitments and ultimately advised the Council, in November, 1961, that he would not be available until June or July, 1963.

On Professor Holford's suggestion, an invitation was then sent to Professor Gordon Stephenson, consultant to the University of Western Australia on the development of their school of architecture, to the Development Commission, Canberra, and to the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments on the Law Courts, Sydney. Professor Stephenson had been closely associated with Sir William in the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, England, and had held the chairs of civic design and town planning, respectively, at Liverpool and Toronto. Professor Stephenson accepted the commission and arrived on August 26, 1962. With due respect, one wonders whether Sir William Holford could have found a better and more acceptable solution than that suggested by his replacement.

It has been impossible to find a list of the

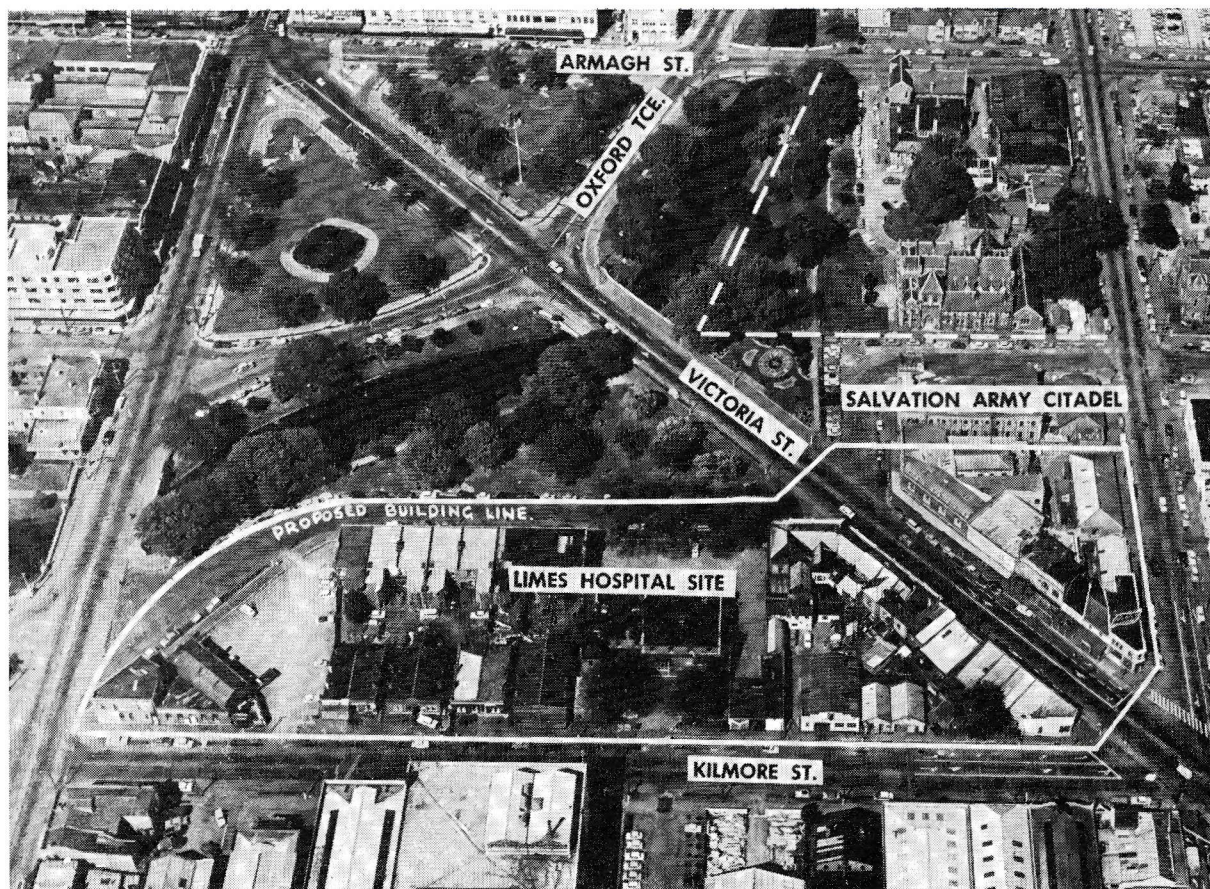


PROFESSOR GORDON STEPHENSON Town Planner

thirteen specific alternative sites investigated by Professor Stephenson and he himself has forgotten several. Apart from some nominated sites which he was asked to consider, he had an entirely free hand and he stressed that everyone connected with the project leaned over backwards to avoid influencing him. He remarked on their tact and objectivity; all helped to the fullest extent when called on, but he received no opinions. He spoke warmly of the late J. C. Foster, former City Council planning officer, who guided him on his lengthy walks about the city.

Halfway through his visit, he reported, he kept returning to Victoria Square, which impressed by virtue of its history and its great potential as a park. Latimer Square was discounted and then the 'library' site which, 'were there not a possibility of an even more splendid site, would have been the writer's first choice' had to take second place.

The Professor's plan made two stipulations. The town hall should be part of a civic centre and Victoria Square should become a civic park. This would be done by closing Victoria Street between Durham and Colombo Streets — a complete pro-



SOLUTION AT LAST. An illustration from *The Star*, October 10, 1962, showing the area suggested by Professor Stephenson for the Civic Centre, but the proposed building line has been extended to the river's edge. The dashed line delimits the site of the Law Courts complex soon to replace the existing Supreme and Magistrates' Courts.

ject which might take up to twenty years but which was essential if the full value of the site was to be realised. Traffic would have to be re-routed round this five-acre open space. It would be, he added, a mistake to build a town hall overlooking an unchanged Victoria Square.

Introducing Professor Stephenson's report to a special meeting of the City Council on October 9, Cr H. P. Smith pleaded 'Let us mark today on the calendar as the day when Christchurch finally decided where the town hall was going,' while the Mayor (Mr G. Manning — later Sir George Manning) observed that here was an opportunity for the Council and the citizens to be unanimous on a proposal which would mean so much to the citizens of the future. Neither had cause to worry. The scheme, warmly welcomed and well covered by both newspapers, met with universal approval. The major obstacle had been overcome, but it

took Christchurch a little while to get over its amazement that unanimity was possible.

Agreement was the readier perhaps because the site chosen, although of five acres against the four acres of each of the other two, was the cheapest. The valuations were: Victoria Square £176,755; Library Block £185,355; Latimer Square £491,595. The value of Council property, however, reduced the nett value of the Library and Latimer Square blocks to £121,985 and £303,795 respectively.

The Bishop of Christchurch (the Rt Rev. A. K. Warren) did not hesitate, and indicated that the Church Property Trustees, the biggest property owners on 'The Limes' site, would not stand in the way of the civic centre, and a group of Christchurch Club members who owned adjacent land (in the name of Canmore Investments) indicated that they were willing sellers. On Novem-

ber 26, the City Council announced that it had purchased the Church property for £76,250. The Church authorities had planned to convert the Limes buildings into a new Church House and arrangements had been made for contractors to move in on a Monday to alter and renovate the premises to this end. On the preceding Friday, just in time to stop the workmen, word came through that the sale had been completed.

Negotiations for other properties took longer, but on August 29, 1963, Cr H. G. Hay, Chairman of the Council's Town Hall Committee, reported that one rood 24 perches had been bought from Wright Stephenson and Company Ltd, and one rood 15.1 perches from Canmore Investments Ltd, for a total of £82,000. The City Council now owned the whole area from the 'Limes' to Colombo Street, including, of course, that stretch of Cambridge Terrace and the adjacent river bank. This contributed to the five acres referred to in the report. Planning could now begin.

The land on which the Town Hall stands consists of the original quarter-acre Town Sections 249 to 254 inclusive, with a half-acre triangular section, 248, at the Eastern end and three-fifths of an acre, No. 255, also triangular, at the intersection of Kilmore and Whately roads. The latter is a carpark pending the erection of the administration and council blocks. The complex takes in the left bank reserve of the Avon and Cambridge Terrace. The four Eastern sections were granted to R. J. P. England by the Canterbury Association in 1851. Section 249 and part of 248 came into the hands of E. Coxhead in 1855 and 1856, and remained in the family until January, 1903, when it was sold to James, Ben-

jamin and David Moore. England sold Sections 250 and 251 to the Rev. John Aldred of the Methodist Church in April 1854, and they remained in his family until September 1900, when they were bought by the Moore brothers for £1,350. It was on the three-chain frontage of these four sections that Moore Brothers, builders, erected the terraced houses often referred to as 'The Bricks'. As they appear in a *Weekly Press* photograph dated April 13, 1904, it is apparent they were put up in 1903. They were demolished in 1966.

The adjacent sections were granted to C. F. Beeby (252) in October, 1855, and Mrs M. Ward (253, 254) in June 1851. Mrs Ward's sections came into the ownership of G. Gould in June 1864 and Beeby's by November, 1878. Gould sold 252 and 253 to Dr James Irving in September 1881 for £1,200 and these became first the site of his home and, in 1904, the private hospital, 'The Limes', run by Miss Kassie Turner.

The remaining section (255) was an 1857 Crown Grant to J. Richards, who sold the following year to J. Mummery. On the Kilmore Street corner, Mummery apparently built the Britannia in 1860, selling the rest to E. B. and F. A. Bishop in 1866. The Britannia closed down in 1894.

There is a legend that the Moore Brothers built and demolished the brick art gallery at the New Zealand International Exhibition in North Hagley Park, 1906-7 (which they did) and that with the used bricks they built 'The Bricks'. This they could not have done. What is very likely is that they used the bricks to build the square cottages on the Kilmore frontage of their property.

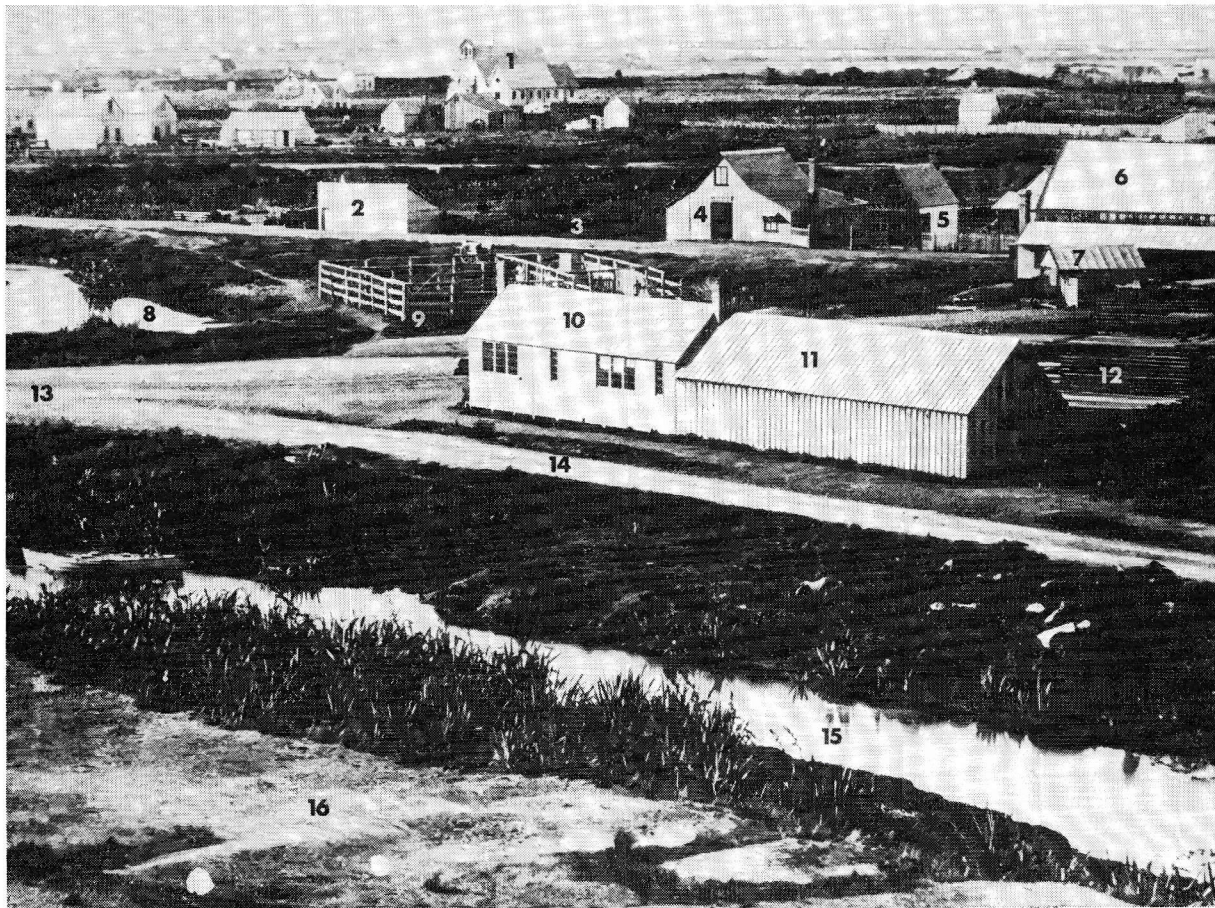
5 : Market Place

PROFESSOR STEPHENSON, when enumerating the advantages of 'The Limes' site as an ideal position for the Town Hall, stressed, not only the park-land potential of Victoria Square but also the historic significance of Market Place, as it was originally named. He saw the wheel turning full circle and the area again becoming a major centre of activity when the Civic Centre was completed.

Market Place owed its importance, in provincial days, to three things: The Market, or Papanui, bridge and Whately Road leading to the North; the pertinacity of Charles Wellington Bishop in establishing a private post office there and the grouping of the office of works, police and immi-

gration buildings within the reserve. A fourth factor was the weekly farmers' market, commenced in May, 1853, for which the Provincial Government in 1859 built, at a cost of £728, a 30ft by 25ft market-house which looked larger because of the verandah on three sides and the smallness of adjacent buildings. Yet, on June 9, 1862, it was taken over as the Government Post Office.

If we glance at Market Place about 1862 we see a rather nondescript area, dusty in summer, very muddy in winter, bounded on the North and West by a flax-banked Avon, flowing faster than today and crossed by two wooden bridges, the



MARKET PLACE, 1861. 1. St. Luke's Church, 2. Forerunner of the Oxford Hotel, 3. Colombo Street, 4. C. W. Bishop's store, 5. First official Post Office, 6. Market-house, 7. Weighbridge and Office, 8. Shingle pit, 9. Pound, 10. Office of Works, 11. Store, 12. Timber stack, 13. Whately Road, 14. Oxford Terrace, 15. Avon River, 16. Cambridge Terrace (closed, 1873).

(A. C. Barker photograph from Alexander Turnbull Library)



MARKET PLACE, early 1834, showing some of the buildings on the Town Hall site. 1. Lummis, the painter, 2. Skittle-alley, 3. Fords, the coopers, 4. Royal Oak Hotel, 5. Garrick Hotel, 6. Colombo Street bridge, 7. Oxford Hotel, 8. The iron and stone 'Victoria' bridge under construction. 9. Lagoon. (A. C. Barker)

one at Colombo Street 13 feet wide, and that on Whately Road (stated by Johannes Anderson to have been built in 1855-6 but almost certainly replacing or improving one erected in 1851) about to be closed as unsafe. North of the river between these bridges on Cambridge Terrace (but designated last century as 'Market Place') is J. Plank's 'licensed restaurant' and a series of tradesmen—painter, plumber, cooper and so on, with the Royal Oak hotel near the Eastern end of the unformed road. Behind the hotel is 'the finest skittle alley in the colony.' South of the river, on the market reserve, is, in addition to the Post Office, the weighbridge and the pound. The latter, built in 1853 is about to be removed since the public has complained of it being a 'nuisance'—one of the earliest examples in the city of an anti-pollution activity.

There is another nuisance—a gravel pit in Armagh Street behind the Immigration Barracks—which is a hazard for unwary travellers by night since there will be no real street lights until 1863, when three kerosene lamps, all in Market

Place, will be erected—two on the Papanui Bridge and one at the Post Office. Next year gas lamps will be introduced. A law requires every hostelry to burn a lamp above its door, but this ordinance is not being enforced in 1868. The City Council records are not clear on the point, but it may be the lagoon on the right bank by the Colombo Street Bridge to which the City Surveyor refers when he expresses regret, in 1874, that his dumping ground for mud and street sweepings is to be reclaimed. This was to be achieved by 1878 so that Oxford Terrace could be formed between the bridges in 1879.

On the west, not quite in Market Place, the Provincial Government Building looks down as benignly and dignified as its surrounding tussocks permit, but the Supreme Court is not to arise for another seven years.

To the east, on Colombo Street, is the Oxford Family Hotel, Bishop's Store, now owned by Grosvenor Miles, Bishop's Mountfort-designed, Goss-built little Tudor Post Office, first used on May 1, 1856, Mrs Williams's 'Glasgow House'



SOUTH SIDE OF MARKET PLACE, about 1863. This picture shows the area adjacent to the 1861 view. 1. Mrs Williams's 'Glasgow House' (later Armstrong's), 2. H. E. Alport's store and auction rooms, 3. Colombo Street, 4. Police Station and gaol, 5. Immigration Barracks (later used by Volunteer Fire Brigade), 6. Shingle-pit in Armagh Street.

drapery store, the Market Hotel, H. E. Alport's store and stock auction yard and, on the South-East corner of Armagh Street, the Golden Fleece Hotel.

Opposite the 'Cold and Fleas', as the German former proprietor 'Baron Von' Gartner, had appeared to call it, facing Colombo Street, are the gabled premises of Doctors Turnbull and Hilson, druggists, whose business is soon to be taken over by their assistants, Cook and Ross. Further along Armagh Street is A. Money's livery and bait Stables, and not much else.

Twenty years later (see Page 38), the second stage of the Supreme Court and the first stage of the Resident Magistrate's Court are completed, and on the other sections of the periphery the building is denser, although most of the buildings are still modest and of timber. Exceptions are George Gould's 1873 Victoria Building (demolished in 1972) on the corner of Victoria Street, and Dr Irving's brick home next door. Opposite the Oxford Hotel is the quaintly named 'Crystal Palace' building, to be known to later residents as Prattley's bakery and cake shop. The McLean Institute building now stands on the site.

The differences are in the centre. Gone are the Police, Immigration and Public Works buildings and, in their place, is a string of 16 stalls forming a 'Paddy's Market' which, but for Tuck 'the but-terman', who may have been the first there (in

1878) and Swale, Fruiterer, 1879, were to disappear by 1886, although Tuck will still be there in the early 1890's. Fruiterers, greengrocers, butchers, grocers, sweetshops, bread shops and, at the end facing Oxford Terrace, two fish-mongers comprise this shopping centre. They are not the first stalls, nor do they constitute the permanent market which had once been proposed. The Post Office building is still there but is now a Coffee Palace with the Benevolent Society occupying the South end.

There is a bridge across the Avon at Armagh Street and new bridges at Victoria and Colombo Streets. Asphalte (sic) footpaths border Victoria Street — the name 'Whately' has disappeared, officially, half-a-dozen years ago — and a tram line points towards Papanui. But Market Place — or Square, as some have been calling it over recent years — has lost its lead over Cathedral Square so far as business is concerned. It is occasionally a rallying point — a photograph of the Bakers' Picnic, 1880, shows some of the 40 vehicles which processioned down Colombo Street to Sir Cracroft Wilson's Cashmere estate. On extra-special occasions arches are erected near the intersection of Victoria and Colombo Streets, as in 1879 when Governor Sir Hercules Robinson first visited Christchurch and, among others, the Diamond Jubilee of 1897.

It is in 1897, indeed, that Market Place (or Square) received a 'face-lift', much of it at the hands of the flower and shrub planting Beautifying Association, and became Victoria Square. The tidying up of the old Market Place is a tribute to Queen Victoria and as a result of levelling, fencing and planting it takes on something of its present-day appearance. But if we take a jump from 1882 to 1905 we find many changes.

The old Post Office has vanished (burnt down on April 25, 1885) and the horse and steam trams are just giving way to electrics. Victoria bridge has been widened, on Cambridge Terrace 'The Bricks' stand up conspicuously, the buildings on Colombo Street are virtually all of concrete or brick, and only Armagh Street has a nineteenth century look. Cook and Ross are there, and the big brick buildings of Treleaven, the corn factor, and the Rink Stables stand virtually side by side. On the northern triangle is a bandstand, probably a part of the Jubilee effort, while garden seats are popular. In the southern triangle stands the Queen Victoria statue, designed as a Provincial Jubilee memorial with its significance enlarged by its being made a monument to the old Queen who died only six months after the statue was commissioned, as well as a war mem-



MARKET PLACE, 1883. 1. Magistrates' Court, 2. Supreme Court, 3. Bligh's Boarding-house, 4. Britannia Hotel, 5. Gould's 'Victoria Building', 6. Dr Irving's residence, 'The Limes', 7. Fish stalls, 8. Market stalls, 9. Weighbridge, 10. Working Men's Club recreation hall, 11. Rink Stables (and Skating Rink), 12. First stone building in Christchurch. (Burton Bros photograph, from Alexander Turnbull Library)

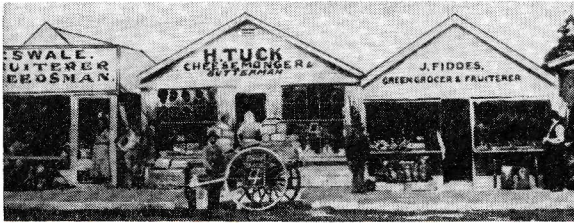
orial to commemorate local participation in the South African war.

The Duke of Cornwall and York (later George V) laid the foundation stone on June 22, 1901; the Mayoress, Mrs (later Lady) Wigram, unveiled the statue on the late Queen's birthday, May 25, 1903, and on April 7, 1904, Lord Ranfurly, the Governor, on the eve of his departure from New Zealand, unveiled the recently finished bronze bas-relief panels depicting the landing of the Pilgrims, the departure of Canterbury troops for South Africa, and a list of the fallen.

For many years, while simple patriotism was a recognised virtue, parades will be held on Trafalgar Day, Empire Day (Queen Victoria's birthday) and on the anniversary of the signing of peace in Africa. It will not be, indeed, until 1972 that two South African veterans attend the final

parade at the statue of the Queen whose soldiers they were.

In 122 years, Victoria Square has changed greatly; little remains from last century and even that will soon be replaced. Working drawings are even now being prepared for the Law Courts to be built over the foundation stone which was laid, hopefully, before the Second World War. Both the Market Hotel (in 1861, C. F. Worth's 'Hopje Coffee, Chop and Boarding House') and the adjacent Federal Private Hotel (the erstwhile 'Victorian') and the Bradley Building into which it spread, are to be replaced by a multi-storey hotel in the new idiom so that Colombo Street will have a modern appearance. The northern boundary, of course, now has its own unique style of architecture. But whatever is done in the future to achieve Professor Stephenson's park-like ap-



THREE MARKET STALLS in the 1880's.

pearance to Victoria Square, some features should remain.

In addition to the statue of Victoria, we have and should keep in the Square three gifts from appreciative citizens. The floral clock was given by the firm of Calder Mackay Company, Ltd in 1953. The statue of Captain Cook, the work of a local sculptor, W. T. Trethewey, was presented by Matthew Frank Barnett, who lived in Colombo Street near Salisbury Street. His choice of site was therefore quite understandable. The statue was unveiled by Lord Bledisloe on August 10, 1932. The Bowker Electric Fountain, at the time unique in Australasia (and there was only one, at Bournemouth, in England but 41 in the United States) was conveyed to the city on February 26, 1931. Henry Layton Bowker, a businessman whose offices looked across Victoria Square, in 1915 signed his will which contained this interesting declaration:

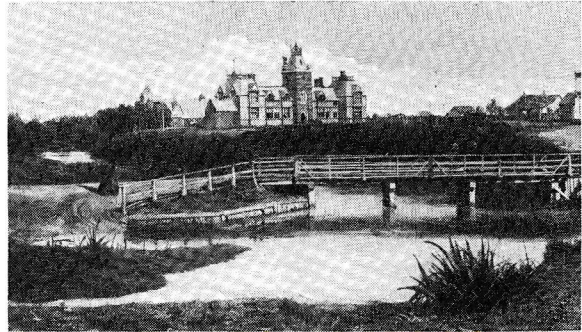
'I Give to my Trustees the sum of £1,000 to be applied by them in the erection of a fountain or statuary in front of the proposed Town Hall . . .'

The Will of this worthy citizen has been done and his faith in his city substantiated, even if it took an unconscionable time to be justified.

Victoria Bridge

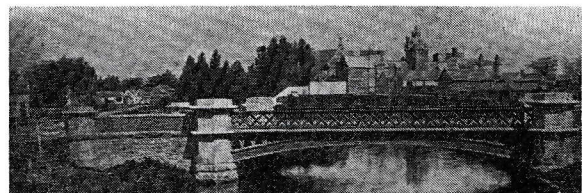
There is, unfortunately, no space for a detailed account of the features of Victoria Square such as the three (possibly four) post offices, the 1860's fire station and bell tower (opposite Haywrights) or the flood of 1868 but the story of Victoria bridge justifies a brief mention.

Johannes Anderson states that a wooden bridge was built in 1855-6 at a cost of £294, but the fact that the Provincial Government had spent £19 in 1853-4 and the *Lyttelton Times*' reference in 1851 to 'the timber for the bridge is on the site' would suggest that the bridge was built at the end of 1851. As early as 1863 the bridge was giving concern and in September it was closed for safety's sake. It was hoped that the materials for the new iron bridge, planned by the Provincial Council but actually erected by the fledgling City



MARKET or PAPANUI BRIDGE (c.1861)

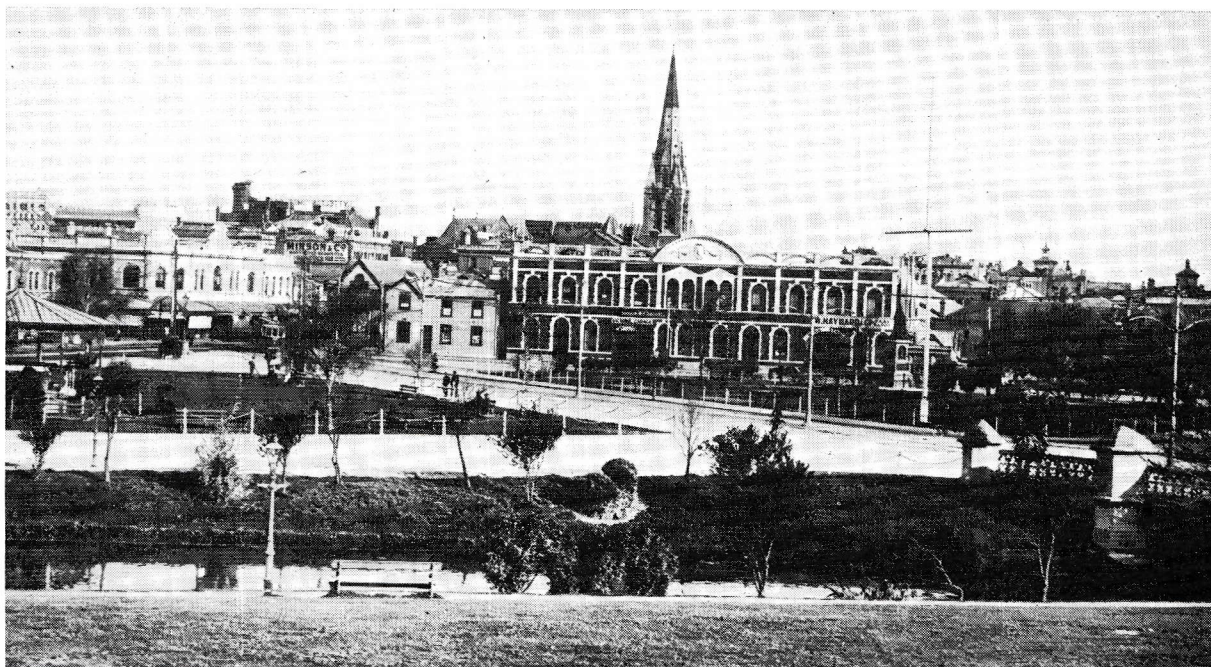
Council, would arrive shortly from England. As an alternative crossing a suspension footbridge was erected at Gloucester Street, horse traffic crossing at Montreal Street. The new bridge, the cracked girders for which had to be patched up by John Anderson, thus delaying completion, was opened on September 28, 1864. The ceremony was performed by Dr Donald, John Ollivier managing the ceremony with his usual flair. Toasts were drunk and a bottle of champagne broken on the deck of what was named 'Victoria' Bridge.



VICTORIA BRIDGE (c.1864)

Although 27ft 6ins wide overall, it soon proved inadequate and alterations began in February, 1875. These involved the removal of the stone wing walls (on the approaches) and the abutment piers on the bridge proper. The bridge was then both widened and lengthened by joining the remaining piers and building wooden footways on out-riggers on either side. The job was done by Sam A'Court, a blacksmith in Durham Street, who fabricated new cast-iron railings from a design by Walkden, the City Surveyor (Engineer). These are probably the present rails, although with further growth in traffic and the advent of the trams, it was found necessary, in 1885, to widen the bridge yet again. On this occasion wing walls were reinstated, but of iron, not of stone.

The bridge thus grew from one with a 16-foot carriageway with five-foot footpaths in 1864 to



VICTORIA SQUARE, 1911, FROM THE TOWN HALL SITE. The work of the City Council and the beautifying societies is apparent. On Armagh Street is the new Hayward building (now Haywrights) containing both the Rink Stables and the Victoria Garage—an indication of changing times.

(Steffano Webb Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library)

one with a 26-foot carriageway and 6ft 8ins footpaths and then to the present width of 46ft with two ten-foot pavements.

Watering Place

Associated with Victoria Bridge is the cobbled approach to the river on the right bank, midway between Victoria and Armagh Street Bridges. This was the watering place made in December, 1874 (and cobbled a few months later) in lieu of the muddy dip immediately on the North side of Victoria Bridge. A photograph taken in the early 1880's shows a very muddy slip in use right up against the Armagh Street Bridge, but this was doubtless a later (even temporary) facility handy to the carriers' kiosk.



'THE BRICKS' just before their demolition in 1968.

6 : On the Drawing Board

WITH a site chosen, the land purchased and the Metropolitan Authorities co-operating, it was understandable that some citizens should question the apparent lack of action. No bricks were rising. The next step was the appointment of an architect and this gave rise to much debate among those concerned. The Town Hall Committee had considered setting up a competition, but after meeting a deputation from the Canterbury Branch of the Institute of Architects, had revised its thinking. There was a strong, and understandable, desire that a Canterbury architect should be responsible for the design, but when the Council asked the Institute to select an architect, the latter was not very enthusiastic.

As on other occasions associated with the project, a happy solution was found. On January 13, 1964, Mr E. V. Dawson, President of the New Zealand Institute of Architects, met, by invitation, the Christchurch Town Hall Committee to discuss the matter. It proved a profitable move. A decision was reached to inaugurate a two-stage national competition. Later, this was enlarged to include all New Zealanders, even if they were practising overseas. It was further decided to invite Mr E. W. Armstrong, of Gisborne, highly regarded and experienced in this specific field, to act as professional adviser for the competition. Because of ill-health he was unable to accept the offer.

The adviser and chief assessor finally appointed was Mr R. C. Muston, of Wellington. Like Professor Stephenson, he was a second choice selection, and like Professor Stephenson he left one wondering whether anyone else could have carried out the assignment more efficiently or with greater approval from all concerned — and that included 'the man-in-the-street'.

With considerable help from the City Engineer (P. G. Scoular) and the City Architect (A. K. Allison) preliminary planning was carried out. A decision also had to be made by the Town Hall Committee on the limit (finally assessed at £1,200,000) to the cost the metropolitan bodies could afford. This problem had been complicated by the acceptance of Professor Stephenson's recommendation that, ultimately, there should be a civic centre on the site. How elaborate could and should the 'town hall' be? Local musical and theatrical groups submitted recommendations as to what facilities should be provided. Sir Mal-

colm Sargent's strong recommendation (probably based on his experience of conducting choirs and the Victorian Symphony Orchestra in the Barracks) that the capacity should not be more than 2000, was remembered. Likewise, Dr Boyd Neel's advice to avoid trying to produce a hall to cope with every possible demand on it from the production of opera to use as a ballroom was heeded, and when specifications were finally produced they proved singularly well balanced.

The panel of assessors appointed to run the two-stage competition, i.e., one in which architects are invited to make preliminary submissions in accordance with a brief laid down and from whom a small number (in this case five) are then



THE JURY OF AWARD. From left: Edward J. McCoy (Dunedin), Aubrey F. de Lisle (Hamilton) and Ronald C. Muston, Professional Adviser (Wellington), on the site, December 5, 1969. Crs Griffiths and Hay, not shown, were Assessors directly representing the Promoters.

(Photograph, Christchurch Star)

chosen to develop their schemes further for final selection were:

Ronald C. Muston, O.B.E., P.P.N.Z.I.A., F.R.I.B.A.,
F.R.S.A.

Aubrey F. de Lisle, B.ARCH., F.N.Z.I.A., A.R.I.B.A.

Edward J. McCoy, B.ARCH., F.N.Z.I.A., A.R.I.B.A.

H. G. Hay, B.COM., F.C.A.

G. D. Griffiths, F.N.Z.I.A., A.R.I.B.A.

ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION

The competition was advertised in July, 1965, and eventually 132 copies of the conditions were uplifted. The City Architect, A. K. Allison, had done a first-rate job in preparing the brief and, as a result, competitors' questions were abnormally light. On closing day, January 31, 1966, entries had been received from 58 competitors for first-stage judging by the panel of judges. On February 15, Mr Muston forwarded to the Town Clerk the list of five finalists.

On May 31, Stage 2 closed with all five finalists submitting their schemes, developed further on the basis of thoughtful and constructive comments from the assessors. Two included models of their concepts. On June 13 judging began and submissions were referred to the acoustic consultant and the quantity surveyor for checking.

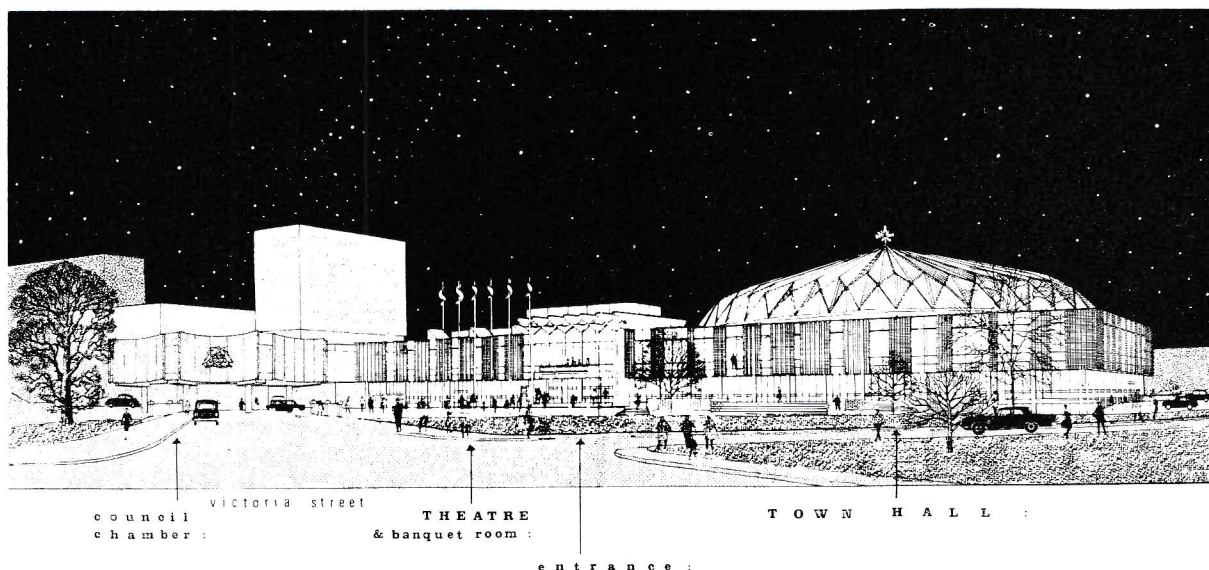
On the 17th the assessors' decision was conveyed to the Town Clerk and, at a special function, the designs were shown to the combined Councils and later were put on public display.

As with the choice of site, so with the selection of the award design, the people of Christchurch were wholeheartedly in accord with the decision. Not that there were no other meritorious plans. The Judges' comments on individual designs made it clear that they were impressed with a large number of the entries, but their summary on the award design is worth repeating:

'This group of buildings will become the heart of Christchurch and its environs. As such it should reflect the pride and enterprise of citizens and be worthy of the quite magnificent park setting. Undoubtedly the selected scheme meets these requirements with remarkable distinction. The opportunity of creating a dignified, comprehensive civic group has been brilliantly exploited and the result will bear comparison with the best overseas civic buildings.

In addition to being an entirely workable and functional scheme, it is also an architectural work of the highest quality.

The winners of the award and the prize of £1,500 was the firm of Warren and Mahoney, of Christchurch.



A CHRISTCHURCH ENTRY. An elevation of the design submitted by Paul Pascoe and Linton which, along with plans from Thorpe, Cutter, Pickmere, Douglas & Partners, Auckland; Porter and Martin, Wellington; Acheson, Stewart & Associates, Tauranga and Warren and Mahoney, Christchurch, was selected for Stage II of the design competition. (Photograph, Green and Hahn)

7: The Dream that came True

It is difficult, for the layman at all events, to place the new Town Hall complex in a specific order or school of architecture. One of the authors was not really being facetious when he described it as 'Contemporary Christchurch.'

To gaze across the grass of the former Market Place and over the limpid waters of the modest Avon is, for the citizen of greater Christchurch, to experience disbelief that a town hall should be there at all. But other sensations follow: a quiet but growing pride of possession, wonderment at the strength and apparent permanence of the mass and delight at the interesting, strong form it presents. Goethe described architecture as 'frozen water'; in this case one thinks of magnificently rugged glacial seracs. But come closer and see the lightness of the delightful river-bounded Limes Room and restaurant, the sparkling fountains (how Christchurch needs fountains!) and graceful terraces and think, with Goethe, of hoar frost and snow flakes.

Move round to Kilmore Street and observe the dignified entrance and the way in which the massive pebbled panels catch the sun. Admire the soaring concrete columns and the varied planes of the wall sections. Pass through the extraordinarily spacious foyer and realise that this is no mere

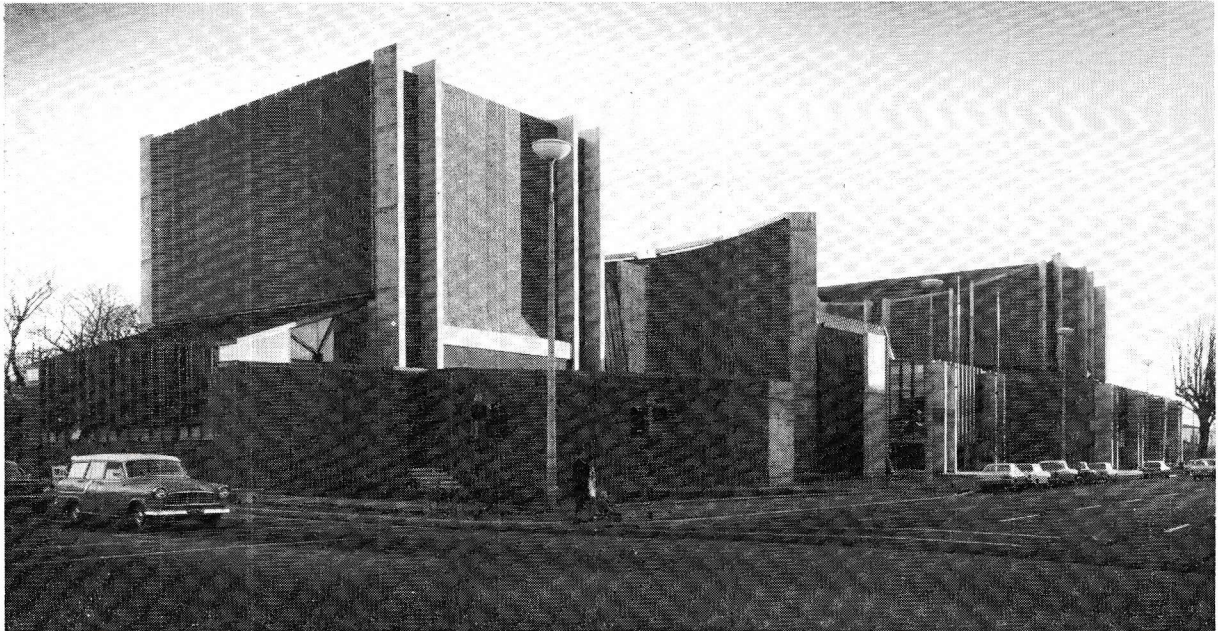
utilitarian porch; it has a personality, a unifying function and a beauty of its own.

Go up to the intimacy of the theatre and concert chamber so fittingly named after the late Sir James Hay. Stand back to enjoy the striking colours and design of Pat Hanly's 180-foot decorative mural, embracing the 50-foot square conference room, pause in the delightful Limes Room to look out across the Square and admire both the view and the inspired imagination which conceived this delightful space, and then go to the Main Auditorium, the town hall proper. Stand in awe at this beautifully proportioned area and try to realise that the ceiling is the equivalent of seven storeys above the floor but looks nothing like it, so perfect is the design. Observe the juxtaposition of stage and audience; there are clearly no 'back stalls'. Look at the acoustic reflectors, set to a fraction of an inch, and try to imagine the scientific skill which backed up the art of the designers in achieving perfect sound, and take justifiable pride in the fact that the special technique of sound 'management', with computers backing up tee-squares and french-curves, was used for the very first time in this particular hall.

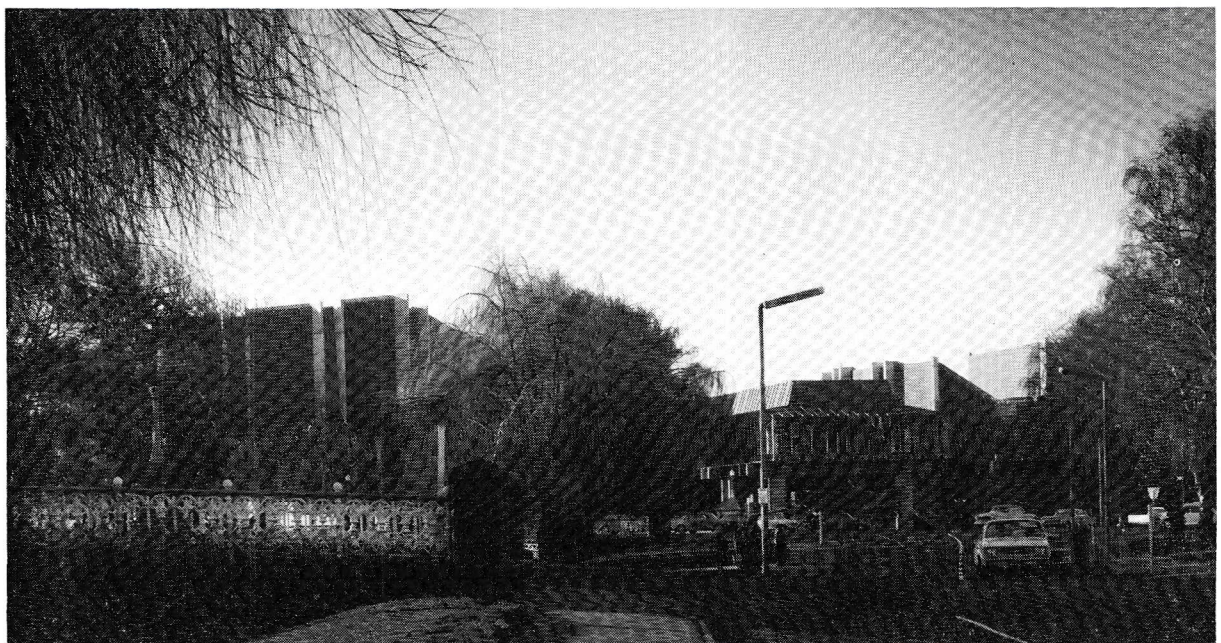
Notice, as you move about, not only the careful planning but also the fine workmanship in



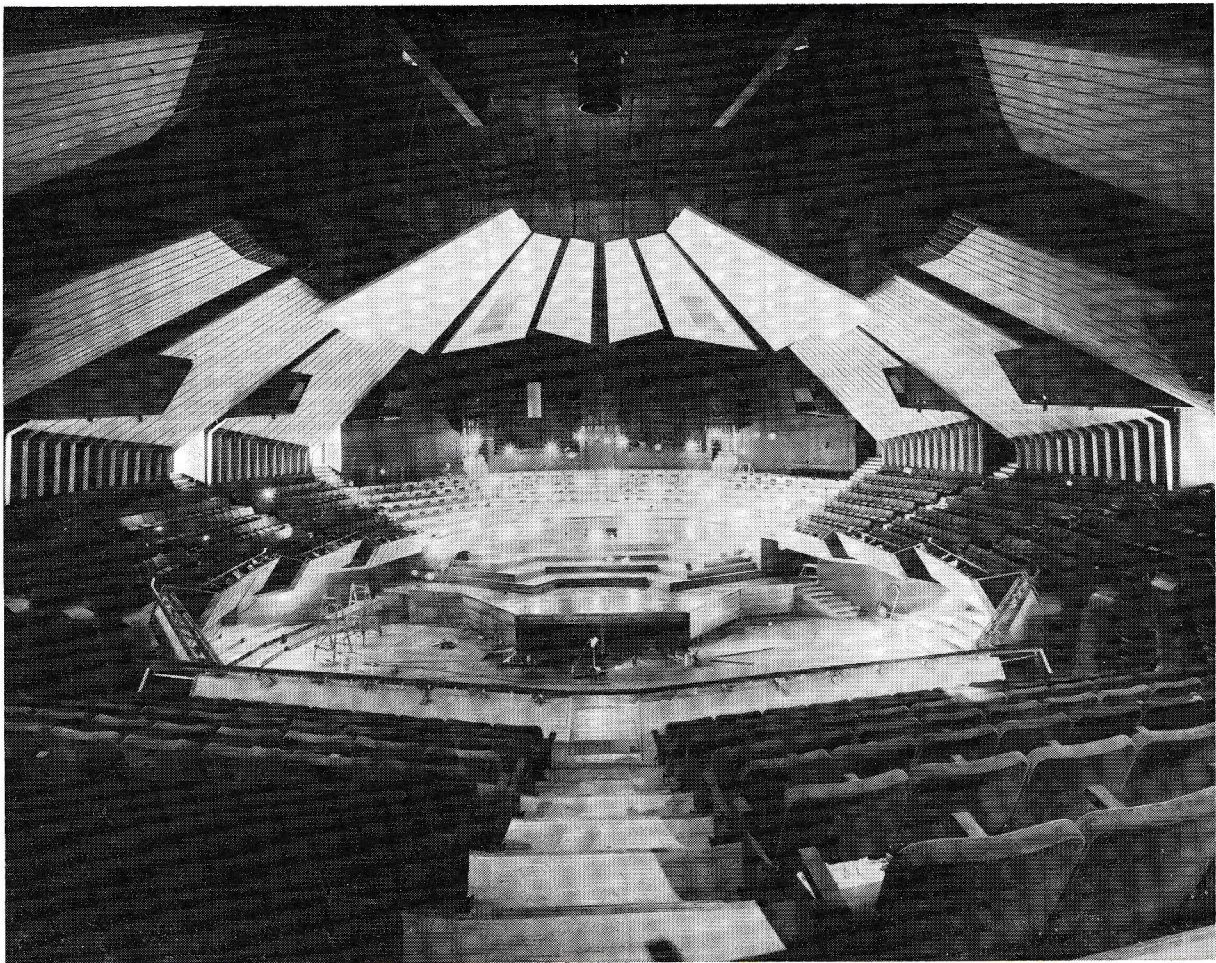
AN INTERESTING COMPARISON—TOWN HALL SITE, 1865. *From left:* John Plank's boarding-house (on the front of Dr Irving's 'The Limes' site), —, G. Lummis, painter, Trent & Co's Canterbury Coffee Mills, J. & E. Ford, coopers, J. H. Nieman, zinc & metal worker, Royal Oak Hotel (Swinbourne & Mahnke). In foreground, the new (iron) Victoria Bridge. (Photograph Canterbury Museum)



THE KILMORE STREET FRONTAGE, showing the James Hay Theatre, Main Entrance and 'Town Hall' proper, August 28, 1972. *(Photograph, Mannering & Associates)*



THE VICTORIA SQUARE FRONTAGE, showing, left to right: Victoria Bridge, Town Hall, The Limes Room (with Restaurant below) and James Hay Theatre, August 28, 1972. *(Photograph, Mannering & Associates)*



INTERIOR OF TOWN HALL under construction, August, 1972. View looking west.

(Photograph, Robin Smith Photography)

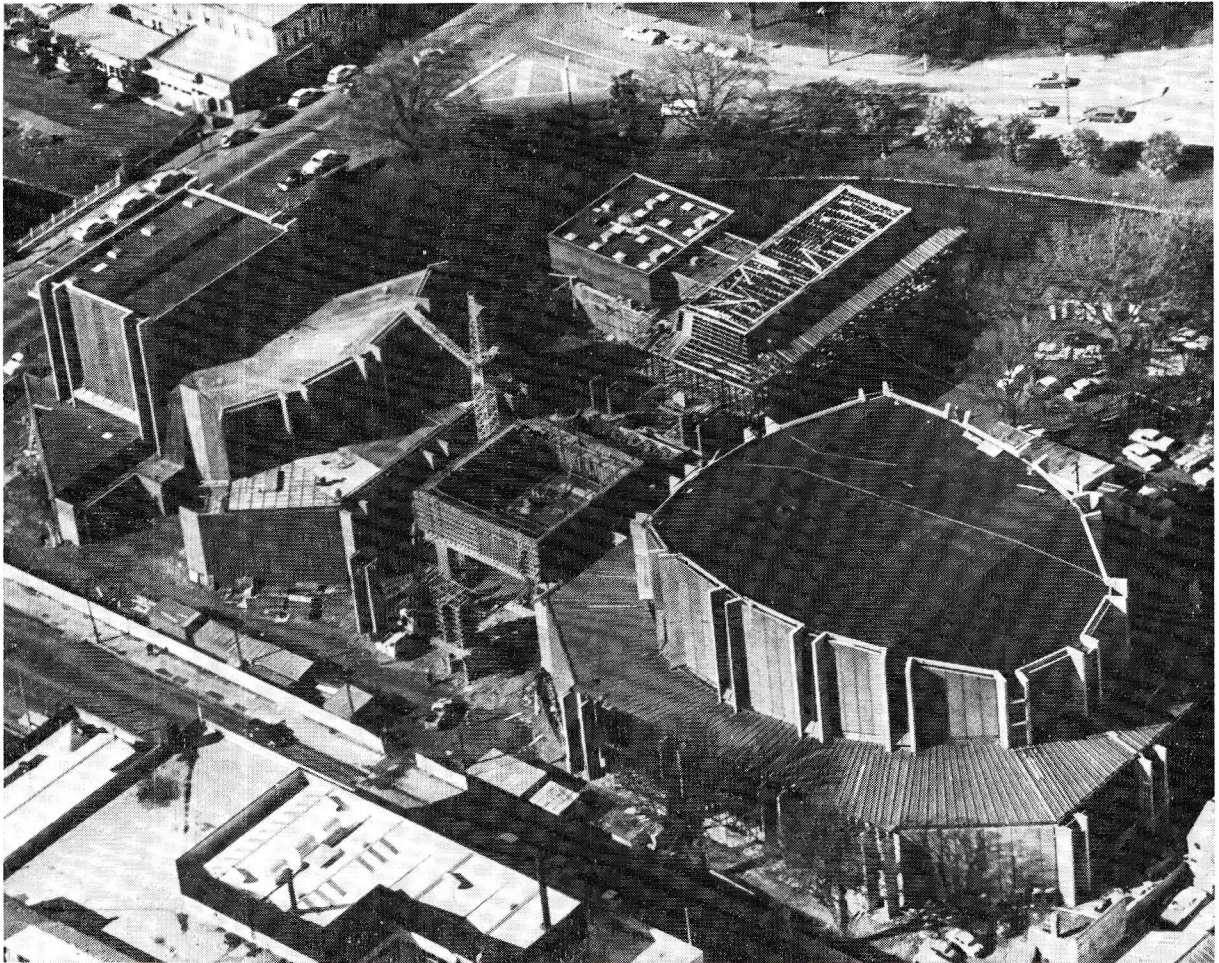
timber (it's largely meranti from South-East Asia) and metal and cement. If you have time to waste, look in vain for flaws. Above all, perhaps, agree that, inside and out, this building gives the lie to any idea you may have had that concrete is a mundane material, effective but uninteresting, rugged but rough.

If you have the chance, speak to someone involved in stage presentation and learn of the excellent facilities provided for performers, producers, television crews, technicians and, for that matter, for meetings and conventions. Then leave the Hall at the west end and walk round the marbled floor of the ground level promenade overlooking Kilmore Street until you see the foyer again. Then stop. You will, in any case, because the view across the foyer to the glass walls of the lower restaurant and green grass beyond is

interrupted by a fascinating pattern of stairways, balustrades and a glimpse of the gay mural enclosing the conference rooms above.

Pause. And give thanks to all those who made this dream come true.

If Benjamin Mountfort's Provincial Council Chamber and associated offices form the highlight of nineteenth century Canterbury architecture and the 'Flemish' City Council Chambers (now the Chamber of Commerce) of Hurst Seager herald the transition to the twentieth century, then the Town Hall, conceived and designed by Miles Warren and Maurice Mahoney, will long stand, confident and strong, as the pre-eminent example of a notable school of architecture indigenous to Canterbury in the second half of the present century.



A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW, taken October 26, 1971, showing the elements composing the complex. From left: James Hay Theatre, with fan-shaped auditorium, Entrance Foyer with Conference Room above and Town Hall showing the Promenades encompassing it. At rear, The Limes Room with Kitchen Block on left.
(Photograph, Christchurch Star)

8 : 'My Business is to Create'

THE ARCHITECTS

WHEN the architectural competition was first mooted there was a suggestion that the contest should be limited to Canterbury architects. Wisely, the contest was opened to all New Zealanders but happily, for local pride, the winners of the award proved to be a Christchurch firm, as was another of the quintet of finalists, Messrs Paul Pascoe and Linton.

F. Miles Warren, F.N.Z.I.A., a Somes Scholar from Christ's College, trained in Christchurch and at the School of Architecture, University of Auckland, where he won the major prize in the subject. After working for two years in the studio of Cecil Wood, the master architect in Christchurch between the wars, he spent another two years doing post-graduate work in England.

Maurice Mahoney, A.N.Z.I.A., in common with several prominent architects practising in the city, is an old boy of the former Christchurch Technical College. He trained locally at the Canterbury Architectural Association's Atelier and was an extra-mural student of the Auckland School of Architecture. By coincidence, he commenced work in the draughting department of C. S. Luney before gaining further experience with Melville Lawry and with G. D. Griffiths. In partnership with F. M. Warren, he took over the practice of G. T. Lucas in 1959.

Mr Warren, says his partner, is the 'ideas' man while Mr Mahoney, according to Mr Warren, is the 'worker'. Whatever the division of labour or of responsibility, it is obvious the pair work very well together and with their consultants,



MAURICE MAHONEY and F. MILES WARREN Architects.

(Mannering & Associates photograph)

Messrs Holmes, Wood and Poole, Structural Engineers, and Maindonald and Associates, Engineers responsible for Electrical, Heating and Ventilation Services as well as with Messrs Russell, Drysdale and Thomas, Quantity Surveyors.

Buildings designed by Warren and Mahoney are found throughout New Zealand and in the Pacific. Over the past quarter-century Christchurch has won more than its share of gold medals awarded by the New Zealand Institute of Architects. Of these Warren and Mahoney have earned an unprecedented three as well as a silver medal. A further award came from the Hawaii Chapter, the American Institute of Architects whose 'Pan Pacific Architectural Citation' acknowledged that 'the work of Warren and Mahoney demonstrates a singular individuality and excellence in design.'

The Town Hall design was born in the sun at Church Bay during the 1965-6 Christmas holidays from which the "ideas" man returned with free-hand drawings of his concept. 'Basically', said the partners, "everything fell into place", although there was much work to be done before the submissions for the first stage were ready, and more when the second stage drawings were required. Naturally, when the award was made and the Town Hall Committee asked for working drawings, a larger team of draughtsmen, under the able leadership of A. R. George, was directed to the project. The plans provided ultimately covered 309 sheets.

THE CONSULTANTS

Without the expertise and experience of their consultants, architects engaged in designing major structures would be, as it were, one-armed. In this, as in most cases, specialists were called in to advise on, and in fact become virtually responsible for, structural engineering, mechanical and electrical engineering and the costing of the project. Each firm became part of the team, the architects warmly acknowledging each consultant's contribution.

It may be that the occasion produces the man, but in the case of our Town Hall we have been extraordinarily fortunate, right from the time of P. B. Watts, that the man appears to have been on the spot, or nearby, waiting. Surely this was the case with Ivan Lyall Holmes, B.E. (Hons), F.N.Z.I.E., M.I.E.E., M.I.STRUCT.E., one of the most brilliant young structural engineers in the country. With an enviable reputation in university circles and in private practice, and known



I. LYALL HOLMES Consulting Structural Engineer

well beyond New Zealand for his work in concrete structures, he was the ideal choice as a consultant. It is a far cry from the skill and certainty of Holmes's work to the inadequate foundations and bulging walls of the 1864 hall. In 1967 Lyall Holmes took into partnership a promising young engineer, Brian Wood, who shared the planning at the working drawing stage. Before his untimely death in 1970, Lyall Holmes had also invited another young engineer, Russell Poole, to join the partnership, which he did in 1971.

The consultants found the Warren and Mahoney designs so well conceived and the pairs of exterior piers so convenient to "hang" the building on, that they experienced no major difficulties. Interesting problems were posed, however, by the need to plan the concrete roof with a 110-foot clear span; by the floating roof of the Limes Room and, most novel of all, the positioning and fastening of the asymmetrical reflector panels to meet the precise definition of the acoustic expert. Positioning the wires to support the hanging panels over the stage was an even more delicate operation, finally solved with

the aid of schoolboy geometry — much to the amazement of cynical onlookers.

Little trouble was experienced with the foundations, which go down ten feet, but it is interesting to realise that the ground floor was laid last, thus facilitating the installation of the extensive services systems. An unusual feature of the great amount of fair-face in situ concrete work was that the contractor preferred to have his own mixer on the site to ensure precise deliveries and quantities.

Acoustics

The viability of most aspects of architectural design — for example, sight-lines, egress and, such is modern engineering, precise reaction to earthquake — can be checked from the plans. Until recently, however, there has always been an element of chance in the acoustic quality of any large auditorium. This does not apply to the Town Hall which, according to one of the consultants, 'is the first concert hall (in the world) in which acoustical quality can be predicted with certainty.'

It is agreed that, while the elliptical main



Dr A. H. MARSHALL, B.Arch.(N.Z.), B.Sc.(N.Z.), PhD. (S'ton), A.R.I.A., A.N.Z.I.A., M.A.S.A. Acoustics Consultant.

auditorium was brilliantly designed to suit a variety of purposes, its very shape provided major difficulties acoustically. The authors had planned the use of reflectors to overcome the effect of the two epicentres and, in 1966, Miles Warren went to the United Kingdom to discuss the matter with the acoustic consultants, Engineering Design Consultants (London). He took the opportunity to study concert halls in England, in Europe and in the United States.

In fact, chief credit for what is anticipated will be a perfect acoustic situation belongs to an associate of the London consultants, Dr A. H. Marshall an Auckland architect, then Reader in architecture at the University of Western Australia.

Using a precise model of the auditorium, on the interior of which he shone needle fine beams of light to measure reflection and employing techniques developed from his brilliant experimental work which involved computer programming on a large scale, Dr Marshall produced acoustic plans which it is hoped will give Christchurch a hall of world class in this respect; those closest to the problem are aware that there is no certainty until a performance is given in front of a full hall — Lincoln Centre reminds them of that. As a result of Dr Marshall's work, the roof was raised seven feet to give ideal reverberation, the ten-foot reflecting panels were adjusted to a fraction of an inch and virtually every seat was tested individually to ensure the best possible audibility. The concrete roof and the windowless, ten-inch solid walls ensure that the auditorium is protected from extraneous sound; the work of Dr Marshall, complementing and perfecting that of the architects should ensure that Christchurch has a hall which is not only in world class by virtue of its basic design but also in the standard of its acoustics. We shall soon know.

Quantity Surveyors

The firm of Russell, Drysdale and Thomas was formed in Wellington in 1943, a branch being opened in Christchurch in 1961. C. N. Toomey, P.A.Q.S.L. of the main office, was appointed to check the costings of competitors' submissions. When the award was made the Christchurch branch, which had costed the Warren and Mahoney entry, was engaged to prepare schedules of quantities on which the contractors could base their tenders. Once construction started, the local partners, G. B. Russell, P.A.Q.S.I. and J. N. Smith, P.A.Q.S.I., A.I.A.S., A.N.Z.I.M., became responsible for calculating progress payments and variations. The quantity schedules they produced required,

because of the nature of the building, a document seven inches thick containing 1,100 foolscap pages—a bulky volume even for a three million dollar contract. One of the first firms to be involved in the project, Russell, Drysdale and Thomas, will certainly be one of the last, as it completes the costing and arranges payment for the final work on the complex.

Mechanical and Electrical Services

Designing systems, but not equipment, for heating, lighting, ventilation and stage hoists was the responsibility of the Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Consultants, Maindonald and Associates, a Christchurch firm which has opened offices in Indonesia. This was another example of team-work by principals and staff but credit for the basic designs is given by R. J. Maindonald to his brother, P. J. Although some requirements were larger than normal and the unusual shape of the main auditorium presented some engineering problems in the design and concealment of services, no great difficulties were encountered.

Like an iceberg, the mechanical services show only a fraction of their size and complexity to the casual visitor. Hidden away in the ceiling and fitted in bewildering array below ground level, are the machinery and equipment whose work is taken for granted.

Heating

Heating or cooling the complex is effected by a "heat-pump" system which transfers surplus heat from water, or draws heat from the complex by means of a 'closed pipe' system using the River Avon in accordance with the stringent anti-pollution requirements of the local authorities. Heating can be supplemented by two 500KW electrode boilers situated below the kitchen block.

Air is drawn into a chamber by two 60-inch fans which can move 45,000 cubic feet a minute and passed over heating or cooling coils to reach the required temperature. Starting in a 42 sq. ft duct at the west end of the auditorium, the air is moved through two ducts of progressively decreasing section (the smallest have a section of about one square foot) on either side of the hall to the ceiling where leads branch off to feed the air into the auditorium under the reflectors and, to a lesser extent, through the ceiling. Another 44,000 cub. ft of air per minute are used by systems in the remainder of the complex throughout which there are 650 outlet points, many of them in the risers of the raked seating. The amount of fresh air drawn in is regulated in accordance with the number of people in the

hall or theatre, etc., while the temperature is automatically controlled by pneumatic dampers in the system.

It will be obvious that an extremely low sound level of air movement and machinery is essential. This is achieved by the use of silencers, acoustic duct lining and low air velocities.

The running costs of this very effective means of air conditioning are low but the capital cost is relatively high. However there is considerable compensation in the markedly increased comfort of the user.

Lighting

The firm responsible for installing the lighting, dimming equipment and sub-stations, again planned by Maindonald and Associates (though the decorative lighting was designed by the architects themselves) was Frank Millar and Co. Ltd.

To service the vast amount of electrical equipment, two 11,000 volt sub-stations have been built, one containing two 1000 kilowatt transformers and the other one 750 kilowatt transformer. All these transformers are connected into the high tension ring main reticulation of the City, thus ensuring double indemnity from power failure.

The enormity of the power load is equal to a new subdivision of 690 all-electric homes served with underground reticulation, while the heating load is similar to that of 1200 single-bar electric heaters. To install all this and other details has taken 20,000 skilled man-hours.

The design of some of the light fittings made in Christchurch is original, and is in keeping with the architecture. Those in the Limes Room are the largest ever made in New Zealand. Consisting of two fitting glass hemispheres large enough to hold 104 25-watt lamps, each of the eight was blown from 45 lbs of molten glass, the most ambitious glass blowing task ever attempted in New Zealand. Each completed fitting weighs one hundredweight and when all are turned on full the illumination is equal to that for 50 average-sized homes.

Electronic dimming control panels enable the lights in the auditorium, the Limes Room, restaurant and the general and environmental lighting to be varied to suit the occasion.

Lifts, raised hydraulically from underneath, require no overhead plant rooms, ropes, counterweights, etc., and the absence of unsightly rooms on the skyline more than compensates for the fact that their speed is less than some of the conventional modern lifts.

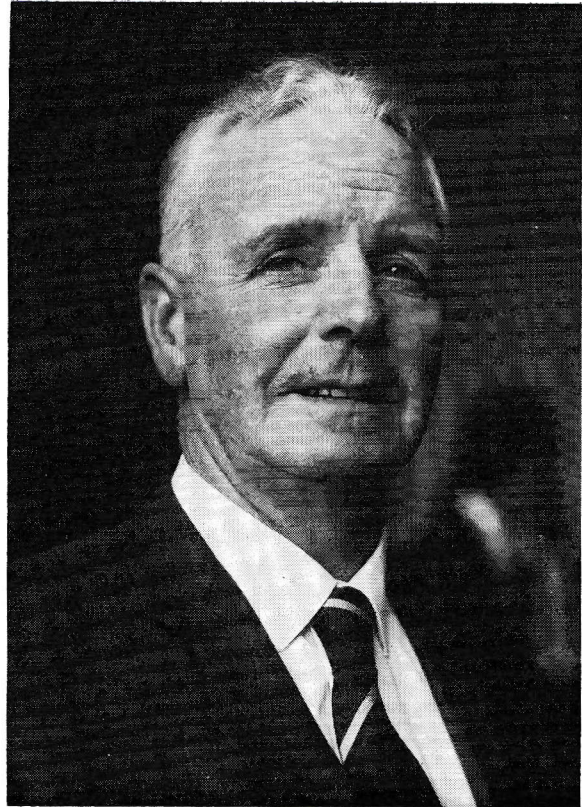
THE CONTRACTORS

While still a pupil at Christchurch Boys' High School, Charles Luney decided he was going to become a builder. There is a story, so firmly held that it has become a legend, that the young Luney, rambling on the Port Hills with a group of schoolfellows, looked over the smog-free city and said to no-one in particular: 'One day I am going to build the biggest building in Christchurch.' If this isn't true, and the subject denies all memory of it, it certainly deserves to be.

Among the many outstanding buildings, in and beyond Christchurch, built by the firm he established can be counted Princess Margaret Hospital and the Library Arts Block on the University of Canterbury's Ilam Campus; the Government Life, S.I.M.U., South British Insurance, New Zealand Refrigerating and Reserve Bank buildings; the University of Otago Dental School, General Foods in Blenheim Road and freezing works at Belfast and many North Island centres. None of these, impressive as the list is, nor even the Town Hall complex, rate as the biggest in Christchurch in terms of cost or volume, but in every other respect, the Town Hall surely stands supreme.

Charles Luney, as 'front man' to the contractors, gives to the team work of his supervisors, foremen and tradesmen all credit for the acknowledged excellence of the fabrication. It is easy for the layman, looking at the superb structure, to overlook the difficulties the builders faced. There was virtually no repetitive work and panels in the ceiling of the promenade, for example, being of different shapes and sizes, could not be reproduced, while the almost total absence of horizontal parallel lines also added to the complexities of a difficult assignment. However, working predominantly in concrete, as they were, both architects and contractors had a medium in which, locally, they are probably unexcelled.

The secret of Luney & Company's success rests largely on the fact that their unique pre-planning technique, developed over many years, provided the foremen with shop drawings for every aspect of their work. These drawings—there are literally thousands of them—were developed from the architects' drawings (themselves of first-rate quality) by the company's nineteen-strong draughting



CHARLES S. LUNEY. Principal of the Contracting Firm.

office staff. Every possible measurement was meticulously calculated and recorded on the shop drawing so that workers could proceed confidently and expeditiously. Without this detailing it is doubtful whether such a building could have been built in the time and with everything fitting into place with an exactitude which is amazing.

The architects responsible for designing our major buildings are often remembered—Mountfort, Gilbert Scott, Petre and Hurst Seager among the earlier practitioners—but the contractor, more often than not, is completely forgotten. If the new Town Hall is remembered as the masterpiece of Messrs Warren and Mahoney, it will not soon be forgotten that Chas. S. Luney, Ltd, built it with almost loving care, craftsmanship and dedication.

9 : Down to Earth

THE CONTRACT

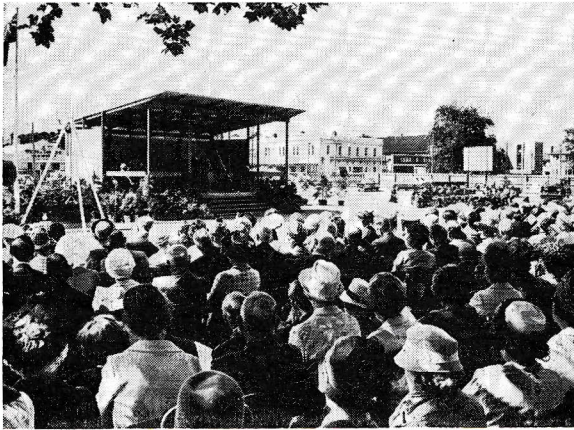
WITH the approval of the \$1.8m loan, the way was clear for the City Council to call tenders. On August 11, 1968, an invitation was made to 'substantial firms already established in New Zealand' to submit their names for inclusion in the list of tenderers for building, mechanical services and electrical contracts. When tenders closed on October 9 six firms had submitted prices which ranged from \$2,472,592 to \$2,950,603. The lowest, that of C. S. Luney Ltd, was remarkably close to the estimated price—just \$2,217 over the Competition allowance. This was very gratifying, both to the ratepayers and the architects, who described the .09% margin as a 'miracle'.

On November 13, 1968, at a special function at the City Council Chambers, the contract was signed by the principal of the contracting firm and the mayors and chairmen of the six local bodies involved. Cr D. B. Rich of Waimairi described the 'momentous occasion' as the end of the beginning. Cr Hay, who indicated that the Governor-General would lay the foundation stone early in the new year, said that the day was a red-letter day, if only because all the local bodies had been brought together. The Mayor, Mr A. R. Guthrey, who congratulated Cr Hay on his energy and his diplomacy when the project seemed in jeopardy, expressed pleasure that a Christchurch firm had won the design competition and another the building contract, both against nation-wide competition.



SIGNING THE CONTRACT, November 13, 1968. Left to right: F. M. Warren (Architect), D. B. Rich (Chairman, Waimairi County Council), H. G. Hay (Chairman, Town Hall Committee), A. R. Guthrey (Mayor of Christchurch), C. S. Luney (Contractor). Note thickness of the volumes of specifications.

(Photograph, Christchurch Star)



LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE. Portion of the crowd which attended the ceremony on February 13, 1969. (Photograph, *Christchurch Star*)

Charles Luney referred to the enthusiasm of his whole staff about the tender, his own 'thrill' at being able to build the 'unique project'. He promised that the buildings would be a credit to the architects, his own firm and the city. He then signed the contract and specifications (the former two, and the latter four, inches thick) followed by the mayors and chairmen and borough and county clerks.

The following day, the first of the necessary office huts arrived on the site.

VICE-REGAL OCCASION

There was something touchingly symbolic in the five-hour wait by an 88-year-old citizen who sat in the sun abiding the stone-laying ceremony. His years suggested the length of time his city had been without a town hall; his self-imposed vigil epitomised the patience his fellow townsmen had shown as decade followed hall-less decade.

At the function, the Governor-General himself and other speakers expressed the hope that he would be present to open the Hall. By a matter of weeks, almost days, it was not to be.

About four hundred citizens — about the number which had attended the opening of the earlier town hall — together with civic dignitaries, the Town Hall Committee, members of Town Hall Promotion and representatives of the contractors, the architects and their consultants, gathered in pleasant weather at the eastern end of the site for the ceremony.

After his young daughter Celia had presented a bouquet to Her Excellency Lady Porritt, Cr H. G. Hay, Chairman of the Town Hall Committee,

welcomed the visitors and sketched the history of the efforts to attain a town hall. He referred to past frustrations and outlined the high hopes held for the benefits to be derived from the complex about to be built. Cr D. B. Rich, Chairman of the Waimairi County Council, spoke for the local bodies who were co-operating in the project and hoped that authorities even further afield would contribute.

Sir James Hay, President of Town Hall Promotion, then presented to Mr A. R. Guthrey, Mayor of Christchurch, a cheque for \$75,000 as a first instalment of the money raised by his organisation, the remainder having been invested. Sir James referred to the unique effort of his organisation in raising money for a civic project which normally would be a charge on the rates. In accepting the cheque, Mr Guthrey declared that the Town Hall would give added emphasis to the development of Christchurch as the cultural centre of New Zealand.

His Excellency said that it was fitting that, as the country acquired maturity, it should develop



WELL AND TRULY LAID. His Excellency, the Governor-General, Sir Arthur Porritt performs a successful operation. In the background, Charles S. Luney and F. Miles Warren.

(Photograph, *Christchurch Star*)

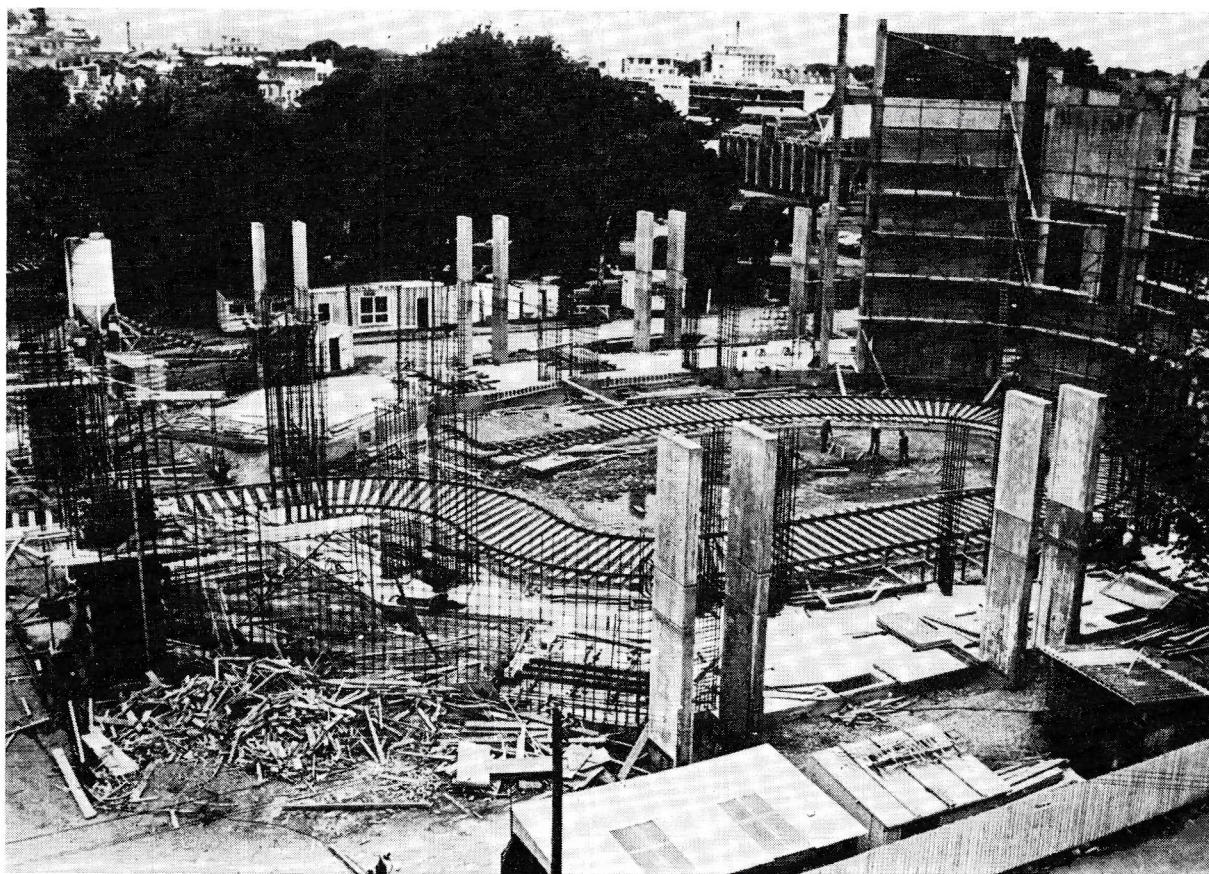
a national entity of its own and that it should create civic edifices that would endure, have a character of their own and engender both local and national pride. It was fitting, too, that there should be a building, and ultimately, buildings at the heart of a city that was the rapidly-expanding centre of a wealthy agricultural and pastoral district, the site of progressively developing secondary industries, the already established and recognised focus of cultural activities.

Guided by W. A. Luney, project manager, His Excellency then laid the large black polished piece of granite, engraved in Trajan Roman lettering and donated by the Canterbury Master

Monumental Masons' Association, to mark the long history of the stone trade in the province. He was then presented with a commemorative book by the principal of the contracting firm.

Finally the project was blessed by the Bishop of Christchurch, the Right Reverend W. A. Pyatt. The inscription on the stone reads:

ON THE TWELFTH OF FEBRUARY 1969
THIS STONE WAS LAID BY
HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-
GENERAL SIR ARTHUR PORRITT,
Bt., G.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., C.B.E.



PROGRESS. The Main Auditorium as at December 20, 1969, showing the 200 feet of 13ft 6in-gauge track which carried the crane used for lifting concrete, pre-cast panels and girders.

(Photograph, Christchurch Star)

10 : A Day to Remember

NORMALLY, history is an account of some facet of the past, but by definition it is also the 'whole train of events connected with some nation, person, thing . . . ' There is justification, therefore, in looking a very short distance ahead to the first use of the Town Hall. This account is being written so close to the events described, the preparations for which have been so thorough, that we can confidently record in the past tense what, at the moment of writing, is merely planned.

THE OPENING

Shortly before noon on Saturday, September 30, 1972, the culminating moment in this story came when the Town Hall was declared officially open by the newly-sworn Governor-General, His Excellency Sir Denis Blundell, G.C.M.G., K.B.E.

Sir Denis (the second New Zealander to hold office as the Queen's representative) returned to this country only four days ago, and the fact that the ceremony was his first major commitment as Governor-General highlighted its significance nationally. The thought could be ventured that Sir Denis will be unlikely to open a more impressive, nor a more eagerly-awaited building, during his term of office.

Telecast live, this ceremony also embraced Christchurch's Civic Welcome to Sir Denis and Lady Blundell. Chaired by His Worship the Mayor, Mr N. G. Pickering, it included addresses by the Prime Minister (Rt Hon. J. R. Marshall), the Leader of the Opposition (Mr N. E. Kirk) and Cr C. N. Mackenzie on behalf of outlying local authorities. Cr H. G. Hay, Chairman of the Town Hall Committee, spoke on the completion of the Town Hall.

Christchurch and Adelaide, S.A., recently established a Sister-City relationship. To mark this link the Lord Mayor of Adelaide (Mr W. H. Hayes) who was warmly welcomed to the City, visited Christchurch during the celebrations. At the Opening Ceremony the Lord Mayor spoke briefly.

Musical items were provided by the New Zealand Champion 'A' Grade Band (Skellerup Woolston), the Christchurch Liedertafel and the Cathedral Choristers.

Their Excellencies entered the auditorium to a Processional Flourish and March for Brass composed for the occasion by Professor John Ritchie.

The ceremony concluded with two musical items: first a setting of the hymn *Now Thank We All Our God*, with Fanfare and Accompaniment for Brass Band, written by Professor Emeritus Vernon Griffiths, followed by the National Song. Lady members of the Harmonic Society joined the Liedertafel Choir in these works.

After the Opening Ceremony, the Christchurch City Council, in honour of Their Excellencies, held a Civic Luncheon in the Limes Room. No more fitting setting could have been imagined for such an occasion.

The evening of Saturday, September 30, marked the first use of the Auditorium for a major musical event, when purely local artists presented The Inaugural Concert under Vice-Regal patronage. A Canterbury Representative Band, under the baton of Mervyn Waters, opened the programme and then, under Robert Field-Dodgson, combined with the Royal Christchurch Musical Society to perform *A Christchurch Sonata*. This was a composition especially commissioned from Eric Ball the eminent English composer of brass band music.

The second half of the concert was all Beethoven: musical majesty appropriate to the scale of the Auditorium. The Christchurch Civic Orchestra, conducted by John Ritchie, performed the Fifth Symphony and then, joined by the Christchurch Harmonic Society (Conductor, William Hawkey) and Maurice Till, presented the Fantasia in C Minor for Piano, Chorus and Orchestra. The programme concluded with a stirring rendition by the combined choirs of Gordon Jacob's arrangement of the National Anthem.

The following day, Sunday, October 1, the Governor-General and Lady Blundell attended a service of thanksgiving in the Town Hall and that evening the James Hay Theatre resounded to the opening performance of Dame Ngaio Marsh's production of *Henry V* for which Jon Elsom, a Christchurch actor, now established in England, was brought back to take a leading part.

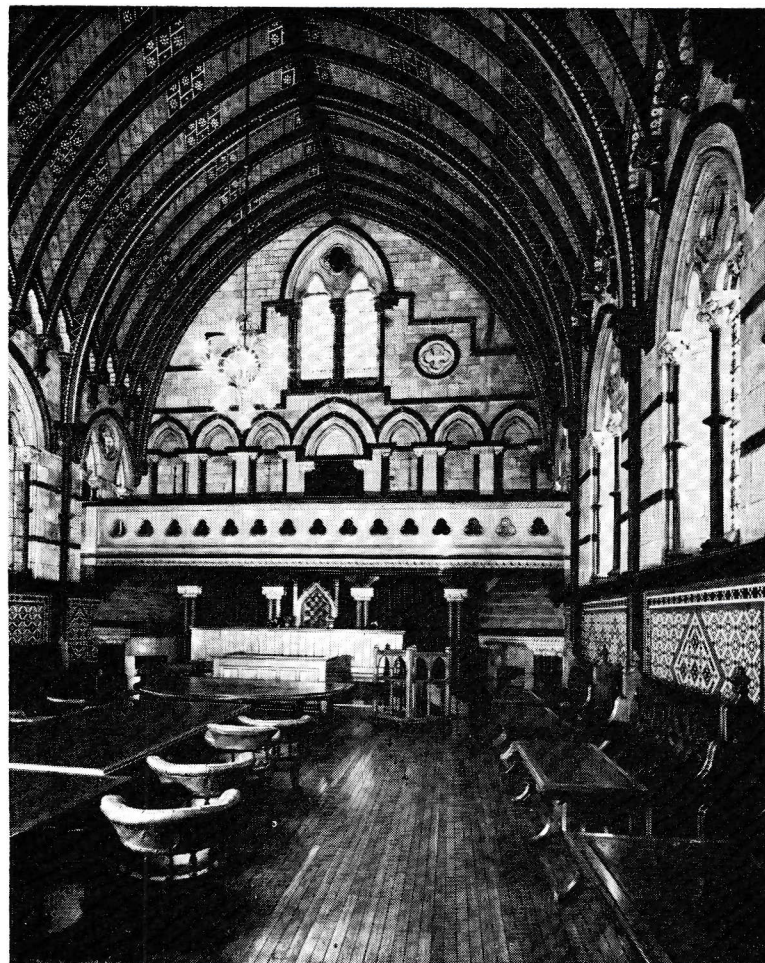
Two busy days inaugurated all the major elements of this building complex, bookings for which are most encouraging. Obviously the Town Hall, in all its aspects, is going to be much used by those for whom, and by whom, it was built — the people of Christchurch. For many, its opening has brought the end to years of dedicated thought, planning and work. For all, it surely has brought

satisfaction that a civic asset has been produced which we, in our turn, can hand down to future generations. Perhaps by the year 2100 our descendants will be treasuring the Town Hall as we treasure the Provincial Council Chamber. In the meantime, let us take quiet pride in this magnificent product of man's hand and head and use it, gratefully, knowing that the century-long dream has at last come true.

The following committee was appointed to plan the Inaugural Concert and the production of

Henry V: H. G. Hay (Convener), H. W. Bennett, E. L. Tyndall, W. T. Rice (representing the Town Hall Committee), E. R. Field-Dodgson, Professor J. A. Ritchie, W. R. Hawkey, Winston Sharp, G. R. Lascelles, R. E. Lavin, A. B. Marston, Alex Henderson, C. B. Hall, P. D. Barton and K. R. Newson (dec.).

The production of Henry V was organised by a sub-committee consisting of: Alex Henderson (Convener), Mrs Helen Holmes, David Hindin, Clarence B. Hall and Peter D. Dunbar.



MASTERPIECE OF AN EARLIER PERIOD. The interior of Mountfort's Gothic Legislative Chamber built in 1865 (just eight years after the tiny wooden town hall) and suggested as a 'Hall of Memories' after World War 1 and as a City Council Chamber. It was used for many social functions, notably for a levee and ball in honour of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh in April, 1869, as well as for ad hoc courts. Suggestions were made, more than once, to pull down the earlier wooden buildings and to build a town hall on the site.

11 : Thanks Be

There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit.

IN assigning credit for community success, as in any other field, it is very easy to overlook those unsung and silent workers who neither seek nor receive public acclaim. We must remember those hundreds of citizens who put time and energy into the various promotional schemes, who were regular in attendance, who made worthwhile though not headline-catching contributions to debate and willingly undertook the less spectacular tasks involved. Without their quiet and dedicated efforts, Christchurch would still be waiting for a town hall. In this category are City Council officers and employees at all levels who, while “merely doing their job”, did it with extra zeal and care because of their interest in the Town Hall and their desire to add their bit to its perfection. The same could be said of professionals and tradesmen in the many facets of design and building of the complex. Present and future citizens of Christchurch owe them thanks.

There are many citizens and firms who not only could, but did, make handsome and very helpful donations. But again, those hundreds of people who, from more modest purses, made just as great (perhaps greater) sacrifices to help make a dream come true must not be overlooked.

Many of these workers and supporters did not live to see the Town Hall finished — or even started — but they worked willingly, as others have, for posterity. Others, and one thinks of C. B. Wells, Charles L. Martin and W. J. Cartwright, have seen the task through almost from the beginning. Two other names should be mentioned — Watts and Hay (in the plural).

Peter B. Watts was not the first to say: ‘Let us build a Town Hall’, but he brought extraordinary energy, imagination and ability to establish Town Hall Promotion, and without T.H.P. the Town Hall would still be but a dream. This young man, in the three years he was associated with the drive for a civic centre, pointed two basic lessons: the need to get people involved and the absolute necessity of raising funds first rather than drawing plans, as our forefathers were wont to do, and then ask, rather helplessly: ‘Where’s the money coming from?’

Unique, at least in Christchurch, was the family contribution to a specific activity, of the late Sir James Hay and his son, Cr H. G. Hay. Even before he was elected first president of Town Hall

Promotion, a post he held until his death in March, 1971, J. L. Hay, as he was then, had shown an interest in the town hall problem and had spoken and written eloquently on the need for such a facility. Considering his interest in music (he was a member of the Music Festival Committee from 1941 and chairman of the Civic Music Council for 16 years) and in civic development, this was not surprising. Town Hall Promotion records make it quite clear that, as president, he was no mere figurehead. Sir James, a highly regarded elder citizen, brought to the office business acumen, acceptance by all sections of the community, an enthusiastic willingness to devote time and energy, and undoubted flair for persuasive extraction of large donations to a cause in which he believed strongly. After his death, Vice-President W. J. Cartwright paid this tribute to a fine citizen:

‘ . . . His heart was set; to him there was no question of failure or delay. His great faith, his inspiration, his leadership and his hard work spurred on his team mates One wonders if the Town Hall would have reached its present successful stage without the influence of Sir James.’

It was a happy thought and a fitting tribute to have named the theatre and concert chamber after Sir James Hay.

H. G. Hay was an original (1957) member of the Town Hall Promotion Committee of the Canterbury Progress League, the first chairman of the finance committee of Town Hall Promotion and ultimately president. Elected to the City Council in 1959, Cr Hay became Chairman of the Council’s Town Hall Committee in 1962, a position he held until the 1968 Empowering Act changed this committee to the present autonomous body of which he was still, in 1972, chairman.

TOWN HALL AMENITIES

The ‘Town Hall’ contains more than the main auditorium and theatre-concert chamber. The extensive, marble-paved foyer which unites so pleasantly the main components of the complex, is planned to serve for displays, art exhibitions and even social occasions. Above it is the carpeted Conference Room of 2,500 square feet, accommodating 250 delegates, which can be divided

into two; the licensed Restaurant, open to the public, can seat 150 persons in most pleasant surroundings, while the magnificent Limes Room can accommodate 500 at a formal dinner. This is a versatile space, with a parquet floor, and is planned to be used for balls, wedding receptions, seminars, etc.

An interesting feature is the inclusion of special facilities for broadcasting and televising — probably the first time such provision has been made in a new hall. From a spacious glass-fronted control cabin high on the east wall, cameras stationed strategically but unobtrusively in boxes or platforms above the gallery and between the reflectors can be controlled. Other ‘cabins’ house announcers, the public address facilities and lighting controls.

Many of the amenities which make the Town Hall so pleasant and so functional are the gifts of interested and generous citizens. Their contributions are recorded below.

Fountain

The day after Cr Hay, in a television programme, had expressed a wistful hope that some citizen or citizens might like to donate the cost of a fountain to enhance even more the Victoria Square-Avon River aspect of the complex, Mr C. J. Ferrier who, with his wife, had already been a generous donor, offered to provide the \$20,000 necessary for this decorative asset. Very similar to the famous *Sphere de Fleur* Alamein fountain in King's Cross, Sydney, and manufactured by the same designers, the feature consists of two spheres and one hemisphere of jets whose water tumbles into a shallow pool on the verge of the river. It was typical of the donor that, when the equipment was strike-bound in England, he should, of his own initiative, have arranged to have it air-freighted to New Zealand so that it could be set up in time to function at the opening.

Pianos

In 1947, the Christchurch Music Festival Committee, founded in 1941, was re-constituted as the Christchurch Civic Music Council. Although it had bought two small pianos (a Welmar and a Challen) in 1950, the Music Council realised that the city lacked a first rate concert piano and therefore, in 1957, purchased, at a cost of \$4,500 a Steinway Concert Grand, which it housed in the Civic Theatre. With a wise eye to the future, the Council immediately established a sinking fund to provide for the piano's eventual replacement.

With the building of the complex under way,



C. J. FERRIER O.B.E. With the late Mrs Ferrier, a major benefactor.

the Music Council intimated to the Christchurch Town Hall Committee its intention to purchase a new concert grand for exclusive use in the Town Hall and in November, 1971, advised that a Steinway had been ordered from Hamburg. The Council's plan, at this stage, was to sell the original piano to augment the sinking fund, which had been increased substantially by donations of \$2,000 and \$200 from two anonymous members. The purchase price of \$9,500 was thus coming into sight.

On Saturday, May 13, 1972, occurred the untimely death of Keith Raymond Newson, B.A., Mus.Bac., principal lecturer in Music at the Christchurch Teachers' College. In a sense the College served as a base for his wide-ranging activities in musical education and community music. In spite of outstanding work with adult groups, Keith Newson was perhaps more widely known and warmly appreciated for his connection with the Christchurch Primary Schools' Festival, which he directed for a period of 21 years. At the time of his death he had been Chairman of the Civic Music Council for three years and was Chairman of the sub-committee charged with ar-

ranging the programme of the opening concert, an event very close to the heart of the Music Council.

On Monday, May 15, someone rang into a radio 'telephone' programme suggesting that the musician's work should be commemorated and then crystallised the thinking of listeners and those closely associated with Mr Newson by suggesting that the piano, known to be on order, should be called the 'Keith Newson Piano'. The idea caught on. The radio station rang the secretary of the Music Council and the Chairman of the Town Hall Committee. The editor of *The Star* was approached and that paper, for whom Mr Newson had long been its music critic, willingly opened its pages to an appeal. Within weeks \$2,000 had been raised, and the fund remains open.

By this means, the 'old' piano, still in first-rate condition and highly praised by overseas pianists, was saved from auction. Overhauled and re-polished, it is in use in the James Hay Theatre and, when required for dual playing, in the main auditorium.

In August, 1972, two more pianos were donated to the Town Hall complex. One, a small Yamaha Grand for use in the Limes Room, is the gift of the South British Insurance Co., Ltd. The second piano is a gift of Mr and Mrs W. B. Gracie in memory of their daughter Joan who was well-known in broadcasting until her death a few years ago. This piano, also a Yamaha, will be located in the conductors' suite in the Main Auditorium but will also be available for use on the stage when the Steinway is not needed.

OTHER GIFTS

Lecterns

The Mayor, Burgesses and Citizens of Christchurch, Hampshire, have generously subscribed nearly \$500 to provide a beautifully carved lectern for use in the main auditorium.

Another lectern, for the Conference Room, has been presented by the Christchurch Townswomen's Guild.

Donors' Book

P. B. Watts, Sydney, has presented a book to record the names of all those who have made donations of two dollars or more to the Town Hall Fund.

Donors of \$100 or more will also have their names affixed to a seat in the main auditorium.

Mural

The Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council has paid the full cost (\$3,900) of Patrick Hanly's lively and colourful mural which surrounds the exterior of the conference room.

Legacies

A number of people have made bequests in favour of the Town Hall or one particular facet of it. Town Hall Promotion continues in existence to accept and administer further donations or legacies.

An Organ for the Town Hall

Although we have never possessed our own town hall, we have had two city organs. The first, a four-manual instrument built by Ingram and Company (England) at a cost of £3,235, had an electro-pneumatic action with a detached console of 63 stop keys and was proudly described as the largest in the colonies — with the exception of the one in Melbourne. Installed in the 1450-seat concert hall at the 1906-7 New Zealand International Exhibition in Hagley Park, first-rate recitals were given on it by the Cathedral Organist, Dr J. C. Bradshaw, and others.

When the exhibition ended the Government presented the organ to the city. It was then housed in Canterbury Hall and Dr Bradshaw appointed city organist with a retainer of twenty guineas and a fee of seven guineas for each recital. These were well patronised, but on Monday, June 1, 1913, the *Press* reported that, although the hall was well filled the previous evening, the takings amounted to only £17 0s 6d — 'due to the large number of threepenny pieces given by patrons in the dress circle.' The advertisement had suggested they should donate a minimum of sixpence!

In 1930, two years after the new concert hall (the Civic Theatre) had been opened, a three-manual, electric-pneumatic (Pitman chests) action organ, built by the firm of William Hill and Son and Norman and Beard Limited at a cost of £6,500, was brought into use. Older citizens will remember performances by the new city organist, Percy Burraston, by Leslie Harvey, Dr Bradshaw — but not until the instrument was completely installed — and, later, Clarence B. Hall. And the little girl from Wellington — Iris Mason — who played when Gladstone Hill was running talking pictures in the Civic Theatre.

Although the schedule of accommodation issued to the competing architects had specified a 1,000 sq. ft chamber for a Grand Organ, the Town Hall Committee, aware that an instrument would cost at least \$75,000, and conscious of the need

to watch costs, did not consider it wise to budget for an organ in the over-all cost of the complex.

After a tour overseas, the Cathedral Choir-master and Organist, C. Foster Browne, returned convinced that it would be tragic not to have an organ. In this contention he was supported by local as well as a number of visiting organists. As a result, in 1970 the Town Hall Committee set up a sub-committee with B. F. Bicknell as Chairman, to advise on the type and size of organ best suited to the Town Hall. After consulting overseas and New Zealand organ builders and organists, the group concluded that the Civic Organ was not suitable for transfer to the new hall, in view, of its age, its low pitch, large console 'woolly' tone and imitative stops.

One thing is clear. Organ music is returning to favour in New Zealand, and when an organ is installed, as inevitably it will be, it will provide incidental music for civic functions, it will be used for recitals, for organ accompaniments (full or

continuo parts) to major choral works and for the performance of organ concerti with an orchestra.

The cost of a three-manual pipe organ suitable for music of all periods, for accompanying large choirs and playing with major orchestras will almost assuredly be upwards of \$100,000. The cost of this will be met from the Organ Fund which, at the end of July, 1972, stood at \$16,126, thanks in large measure, to the generosity of Mr and Mrs Jack Ferrier, whose magnificent gift of \$10,000 announced at the laying of the foundation stone, is a token of the interest in the completion of the Town Hall shared by many citizens.

The skill and ingenuity of the architects in disguising the presence of empty organ chambers is to be admired; the sight and sound of a handsome, well-built organ will be appreciated much more.

MAJOR TOWN HALL GIFTS

	\$		\$
Associated Trading Banks in New Zealand	2,000	Midland Motorways Services Ltd.	1,500
Aulsebrook & Co. Ltd	1,000	Millers Ltd.	2,000
J. Ballantyne & Co. Ltd.	1,000	N.Z. Breweries Ltd.	2,000
Ballins Industries Ltd.	1,000	N.Z. Farmers'Co-op. Assn of Cnty Ltd.	1,000
Bank of New Zealand	12,000	N.Z. Insurance Co. Ltd.	1,000
Beath & Co. Ltd.	1,000	Pyne, Gould, Guinness Ltd.	2,000
Estate Levi Blood	1,500	Ryan Bros Ltd.	1,200
Canterbury Jockey Club	1,000	Skellerup Industries Ltd.	2,000
Canterbury Master Builders' Assn	1,440	South British Insurance Co. Ltd.	2,000
Canterbury Timber Merchants' Assn.	1,058	Mrs H. Vale	2,000
Christchurch Press Co. Ltd.	1,000	Woolworths (N.Z.) Ltd.	1,000
Christchurch Star	10,000	NMA Wright Stephenson Holdings Ltd.	4,000
David Crozier Ltd.	1,700	Mr and Mrs B. F. Bicknell	2,000
Mr and Mrs Jack Ferrier	34,000	Mrs M. A. Bradshaw	1,000
Firestone Tyre & Rubber Co. Ltd.	1,000	Hamilton, Hindin, Greene & Co.	1,100
Estate Miss A. M. M. Frostick	3,980	Est. Miss A. M. Wilson	1,626
General Foods Corporation (N.Z.) Ltd.	1,400	The Samoan Community in Christchurch	1,000
Gough, Gough & Hamer Ltd.	1,000	Est. George J. Turnpenny	10,000
Sir James and Lady Hay and Family	2,000	Mr and Mrs T. W. Perry	1,250
Haywrights Ltd.	2,250	Mrs K. McCreanor, M.B.E., in memory of	
Mr Andrew Hughes	4,000	Miss Kassie Turner of 'The Limes' and	
Lane, Walker, Rudkin Ltd.	2,000	Charles Wesley Turner, pioneer settler	1,000
Lichfield (N.Z.)) Ltd.	1,500		

12 : Facts and Figures

THE CHRISTCHURCH TOWN HALL

<i>Administered by:</i>	The Christchurch Town Hall Committee (Established pursuant to the Christchurch Town Hall Empowering Act, 1968).
<i>Secretary:</i>	M. B. Hayes, J.P. Town Clerk of Christchurch.
<i>Committee Clerk:</i>	H. L. Langley.
<i>Town Hall Manager:</i>	B. Patrick Connell.
<i>Architects:</i>	Warren and Mahoney.
<i>Contractor:</i>	Chas. S. Luney Ltd.
<i>Consulting Engineers:</i>	Holmes, Wood & Poole.
<i>Services Consultant:</i>	Maindonald & Associates.
<i>Acoustics Consultant:</i>	Engineering Design Consultants (London). Dr A. H. Marshall (Perth).
<i>Quantity Surveyors:</i>	Russell, Drysdale and Thomas.

SUB-CONTRACTORS

Addington Timber Co. Ltd: Laminated timber (Hall reflectors, Restaurant beams).
 F. P. Allison: Drainage.
 Andrews and Beaven Limited: Stage Hoist Equipment.
 Thos. Andrews and Son: Terrazzo Work.
 British Pavements Canterbury Ltd: Excavation; Damp-proofing; Special water-proofing.
 Burns and Ferrall (S.I.) Ltd: Stainless steel benching.
 A. & T. Burt Limited: Plumbing.
 Brown and Andrews (ChCh) Ltd: Special waterproofing.
 Cashmere Drilling Limited: Excavations.
 Canterbury Stone Co. Ltd: Masonry work.
 Certified Concrete (ChCh) Ltd: Pre-cast concrete.
 Columbia Blocks Limited: Concrete blockwork.
 C. W. A. Cairns Limited: Solid plaster work; Acoustic sprayed plaster; Sprayed concrete pools (site work).

Canterbury Laminates Limited: Laminated timber (stair treads, balustrade panels).
 O. Foster: Tile work (brick terrace and steps).
 The Fletcher Mechanical Services Ltd: Heating and air conditioning.
 Thos. L. Jones and Son Ltd: Foyer Elevator.
 Frank Millar and Co., Limited: Electrical work.
 Otis Elevator Co., Ltd: Kitchen block lift.
 J. Mercer and Sons Ltd: Cooking equipment.
 Prodger and Bullock: Ceramic tiling.
 Pillar, A. H. I. Limited: Steel windows.
 Righton Roofing Contracts: Damp-proofing; Butynol roofing.
 Reese Bros Ltd: Floor coverings.
 Smith and Smith Limited: Glazing.
 R. L. Sparrow Limited: Interior timber, folding, sliding doors.
 Winstones (S.I.) Limited: Copper roofing and cladding.
 Wardrop's Fibrous Plaster Ltd: Fibrous plaster; Acoustic ceiling tiles.
 Wormald Bros (N.Z.) Limited: Metal fire doors; fire sprinklers; aluminium glazed doors.

CONTRACTOR'S TRADES

Chas. S. Luney Ltd: Exposed aggregate precast concrete wall panels; in situ concrete; reinforcing steelwork; structural steel; metalwork; carpentry; joinery; painting; site works — base concrete retaining walls. (Trades carried out, on and off the site).

SEPARATE CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTORS

(outside main building contract)

N.Z. Lace Webb Manufacturing Co. Ltd: Hall and Theatre seating.
 Reese Bros Ltd: General window curtaining.
 Sherlock and Cotton Ltd: Theatre stage equipment.
 Television and Radio Services Ltd: Sound system.

STATISTICS

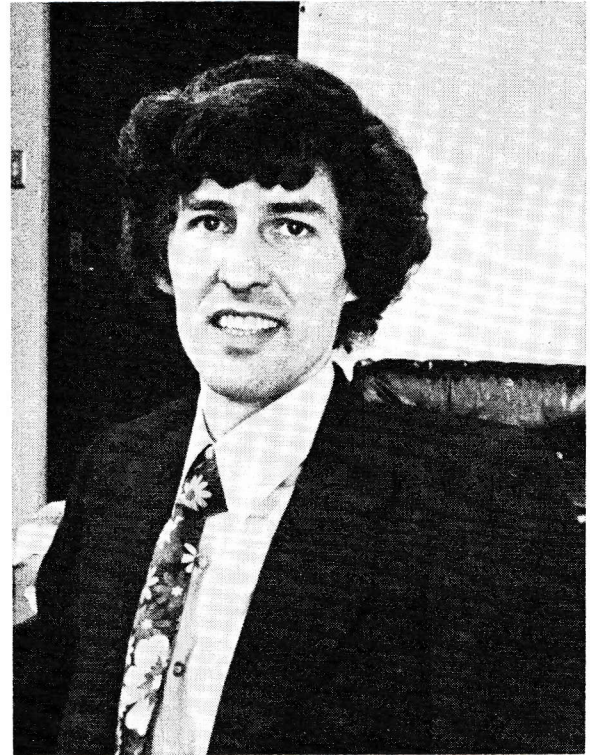
Architectural competition:	
Closed	31.1.66
Finalists selected	15.2.66
Award design announced	16.6.66
Working drawings completed	July, 68
Tenders called	10.8.68
Site cleared	15.9.68-21.10.68
Contract let	13.11.68
Work commenced	18.11.68
Area of complex (95,000 sq. ft)	2.2acs
Length	455ft
Maximum width	154ft
Maximum height	78ft
Volume of buildings	1,860,000 cub. ft
Weight of buildings ¹ approx.	20,000 tons
Reinforcing steel	615 tons
In-situ concrete (8,500 yds)	12,000 tons
Pre-cast concrete	4,200 tons
Largest pre-cast panel	3.5 tons
Longest (106ft) roof truss ²	8 tons
Copper sheathing	34 tons
Quantity of timber	350,000 super ft
Area of carpet	36,000 sq. ft
Marble	22,000 sq. ft
Electrical installations:	
Cable	57 miles
Conduit	5.8 miles
Trunkings	1.43 miles
Light fittings	approx. 2,452
Light, etc., switches	226
Ventilation & Heating Systems:	
Length of service tunnels	c.750ft
Piping (mostly 5ins)	2.5 miles
Air ducts	1.25 miles
Materials in air ducts:	
Galvanised iron	35 tons
Angle steel	22 tons
Insulation	32,000 sq. ft
Area of glass	25,000 sq. ft
Weight	52 tons
Thickness: Ground floor, $\frac{3}{8}$ in; first floor, $\frac{1}{2}$ in	
Polished & channelled edges	1.3 miles
Main Auditorium:	
Area (total)	12,660 sq. ft
Area (clear)	10,622 sq. ft
Length	147ft
Width	106ft
Height	70ft
Seating capacity (two levels)	2,662
Provision for choir of 400, orchestra of 100	

James Hay Theatre and Concert Chamber:

Area	9,510 sq. ft
Depth	130ft
Width (maximum)	153ft
Height of flytower (interior)	50ft
Fire curtain (64ft x 22ft)	7 tons
Seating capacity (two levels)	1008
Capacity, orchestral pit	30
Concourse, area	20,000 sq. ft
Meeting rooms (all)	7,700 sq. ft
Conference Room	2,500 sq. ft
Capacity	250
Restaurant, area	2,640 sq. ft
Capacity	150 persons
Limes Room, area	6,156 sq. ft
Capacity	500 seated

¹ All up deadweight.

² All supports 655 tons, deadweight.



B. PATRICK CONNELL. Manager Christchurch Town Hall.
(Photograph The Press)

Miscellany

'City Hall'?

From time to time individual citizens suggested that the complex or the main auditorium, specifically, be called 'City Hall'. No doubt they felt this was a grander name indicating larger size, more impressive appearance and a superiority over cities with mere "town" halls.

The Town Hall Committee, and all those connected with the project, continued the use of 'Town Hall'—partly through habit, possibly through an ingrained tendency to understatement or just by preference. Cities much larger than Christchurch and with halls as large as ours see no shame in referring to them as 'town' halls, which is the traditional English form. The Concise Oxford Dictionary does not recognise the American 'city' hall which, to many people, conveys the idea of petty politics—to say nothing of Tammany. To Americans, city hall means civic administration offices and officials rather than a community auditorium.

It was strange, it might be observed, that none of the City Hall advocates suggested changing the honoured title of 'Town Clerk' to 'City Clerk'.

Foresight

Glass for the complex was ordered from France, the U.K. and U.S.A., each order being required to be shipped in two consignments to avoid delay in case of accident. The wisdom of this was seen when a quantity ordered from America was completely destroyed in a train accident and its replacement held up by a long-shoremen's strike. What was ordered in March, 1971, arrived in July, 1972. The British supply was also delayed by wharf troubles.

Vandalism

Maintenance, especially of the old Town Hall, was always an expensive problem, often avoided. One correspondent in the *Lyttelton Times* (January 15, 1863) drew attention to the fact that a window in the hall had been broken for some time and that some individual had taken advantage of this to push through a bucket of tar and a brush and daub the clothing of the male members of the English Opera Company. 'When will the authorities have the building called the

Town Hall put into respectable repair?' bewailed the writer.

Christchurch once had the 'Old' Town Hall and then the 'New' Town Hall. Perhaps we, and those who follow, can be happy that we have 'The' Town Hall.

Town Hall Symbol

The colophon, or symbol, printed on the title page is a little conceit based on the plan of the main auditorium. It is used by the Town Hall Committee on letterheads and in advertisements to identify the Town Hall Complex.

Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow

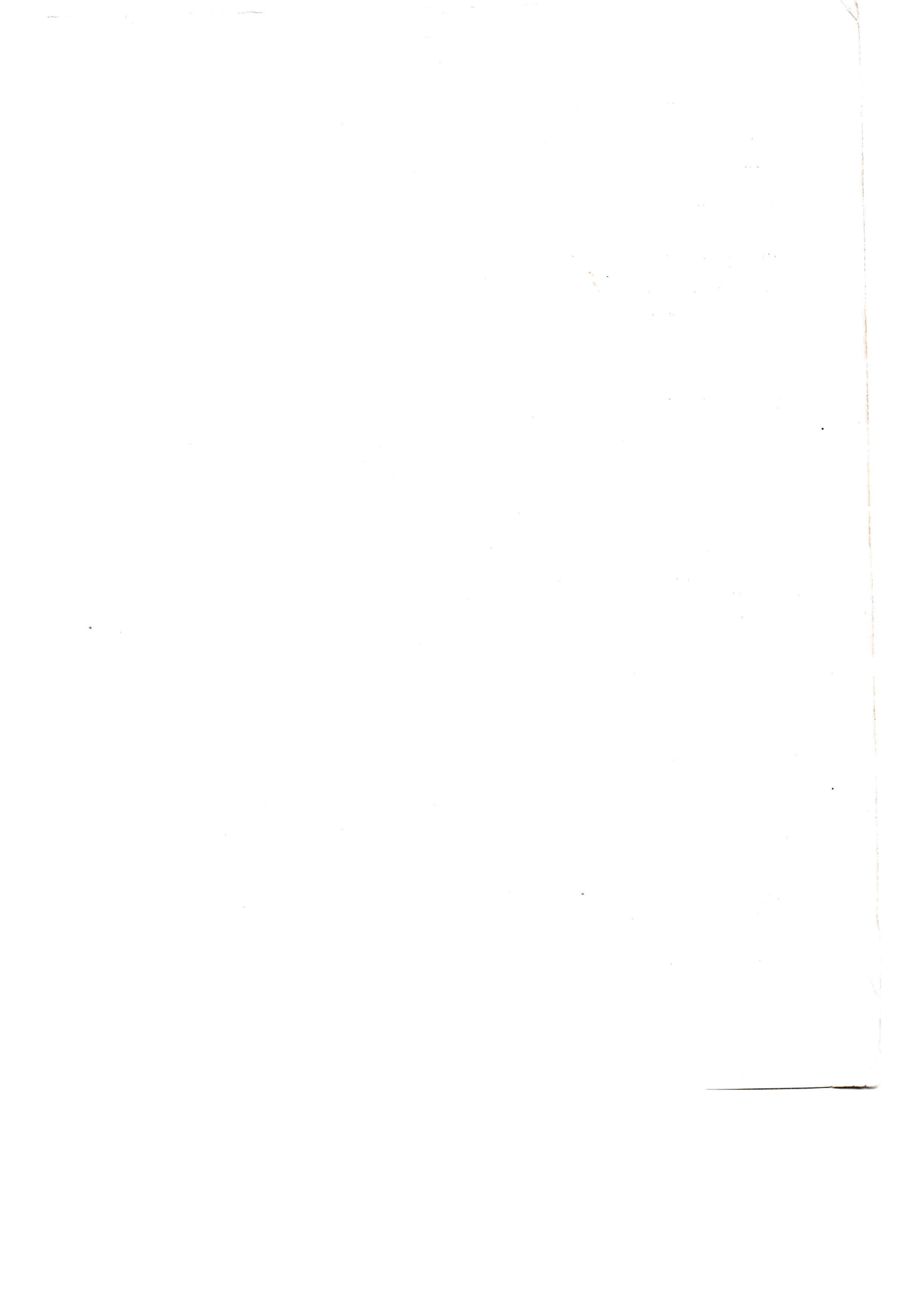
The perpetuation of error is exemplified by the consistency with which accounts of the early town halls assign the years 1862-63 to the building of the 'New' Town Hall. A reporter, writing in the *Lyttelton Times* on September 14, 1871, referred to it having being erected in '1862-63' and subsequent writers—even of the stature of Johannes Andersen and Henry Wigram—have accepted the reporter's slip ever since. In 1862, a plan was accepted from Mallinson but this was subsequently dropped and it was not until August 6, 1863 that the *Press* reported plans for the raising of capital for the new town hall. From May until August, 1864, the *Lyttelton Times* had monthly reports on the progress in erecting the hall to S. C. Farr's 'somewhat heavy design'. Wigram agrees that the hall was opened on September 16, 1864, but his reference to the 'New Town Hall (rebuilt)' is misleading.

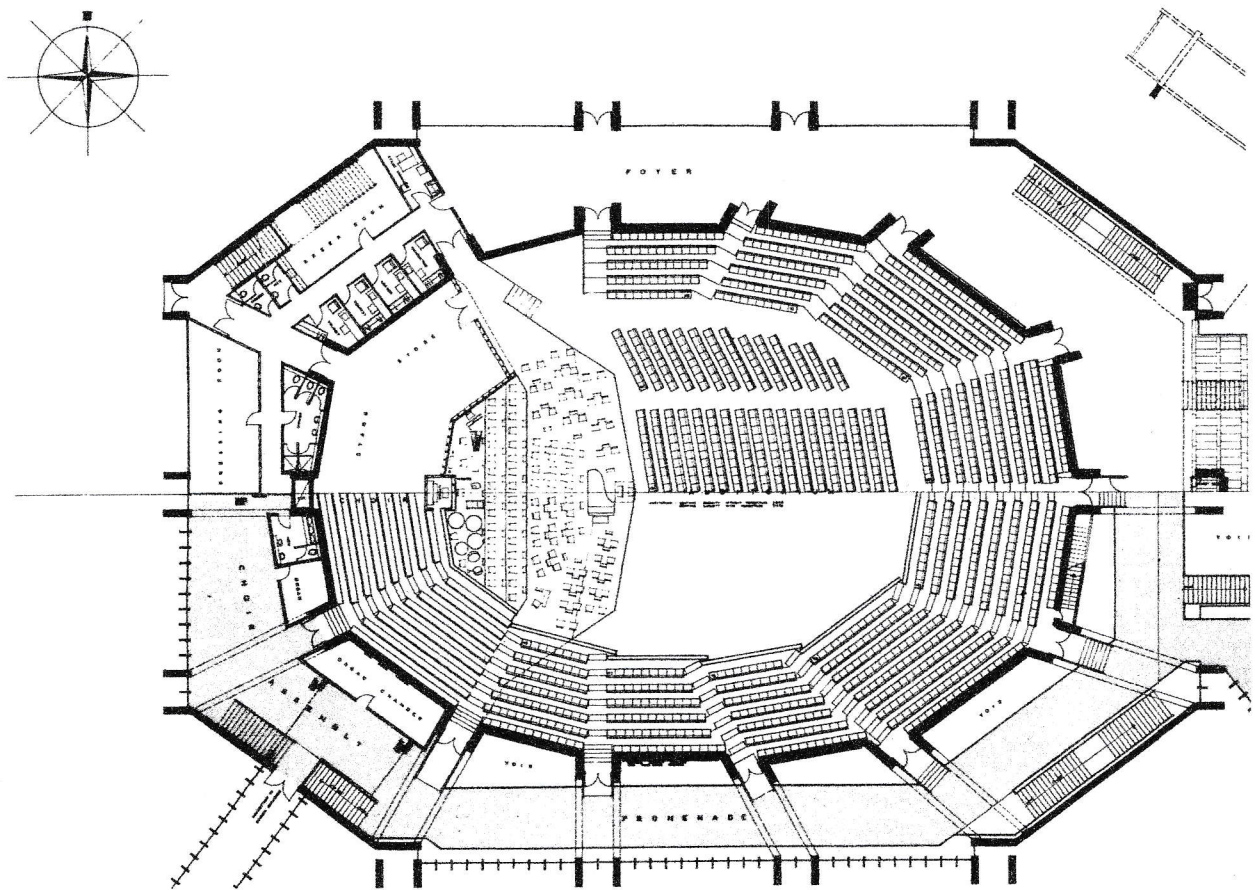
Acknowledgement

In compiling this little booklet I have called on the help of many people who, I trust, will accept my very warm thanks for their invariable courtesy, patience and valued assistance.

W. J. A. Brittenden

PROFITS FROM THE SALE OF THIS
BOOKLET WILL BE CREDITED TO
THE ORGAN FUND





Note: This plan is divided in half, horizontally. The upper section shows the ground floor and the lower half the first floor except that, in the James Hay Theatre, the reverse is the case.

